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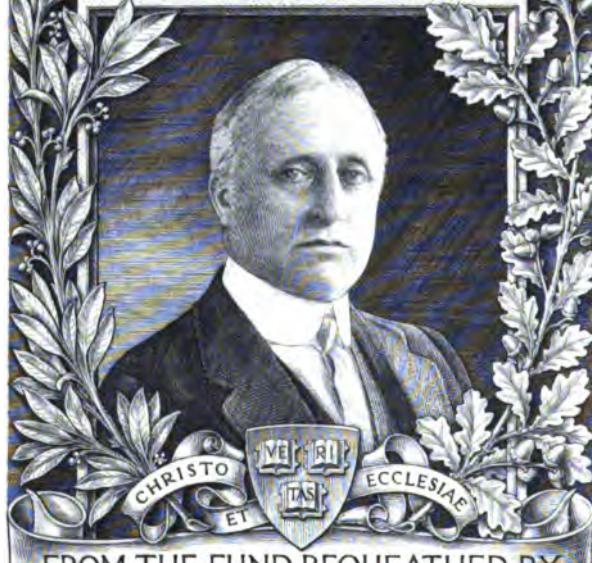
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# THE STRATFORD JOURNAL

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## AN INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE

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EDITORS

ISAAC GOLDBERG

HENRY T. SCHNITTKIND

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VOL. III.

JULY, 1918

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# THE STRATFORD JOURNAL

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:: JUNE, NINETEEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTEEN ::

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*The single fixed policy of the Stratford Journal is to endeavor to print the best in foreign and native literature. It is allied to no fad or cult and committed to no 'ology' or 'ism'. It welcomes the work of new writers particularly.*

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## The Last Lesson

A Story of a Little Alsatian [of 1870]

BY ALPHONSE DAUDET

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY GRACE ROBINSON

[*Out of the heart of the Alsace-Lorraine of forty-eight years ago this classic tale has come. What Daudet tells of the stricken country of half a century ago, in the Franco-Prussian War, is of especial interest now while the World-War roars around that little land.*]

**T**HAT morning I was very late in going to school; and I was afraid of being scolded, especially as Monsieur Hamel had said that he would ask us about the participles. And I did not know the first word about them. Once the idea came to me of skipping school and running away out into the country.

The weather was so warm, so clear!

Away off on the edge of the woods, the blackbirds were singing; and in Rippert's meadow, behind the sawmill, the Prussians were going through their daily drill. All this was much more tempting to me than the syntax of participles; but I had the strength to resist it. And then I ran very quickly towards the school.

As I was passing the town hall, I saw that some people had stopped before the little billboard. For two years so much evil news had come to us, tidings of battles lost, of requisitions, of orders by the commandery, that, without stopping, I thought:

"I wonder what it is now!"

Then, as I was running across the square, the blacksmith,

Wachter, who was there with his apprentice to read the bulletin, called to me:

“You do not need to hurry so much, my little one; you will arrive at your school soon enough!”

I believed that he was laughing at me. And I hurried, all breathless, into Monsieur Hamel’s little yard.

Usually, at the beginning of school, there was a great noise which could be heard even out in the street,—the confusion of desks opened and closed, of lessons repeated very loudly all together, as we covered up our ears to hear the better and, in the midst of this, the master’s great ruler beating upon the table:

“A little quiet now!”

I had counted upon all this uproar in trying to get to my seat unnoticed. But on that day everything was quiet, as if it were a Sunday morning. Through the opened window I saw my comrades already in their places and Monsieur Hamel, who was walking up and down with the terrible brass rule under his arm. In the midst of that great silence I had to open the door and enter. You may imagine whether I grew red and whether I was frightened!

But I had no need to fear; ah, no. Monsieur Hamel looked at me without anger and said very gently:

“Go quickly to your place, my little Frantz; we were about to begin without you.”

I climbed upon my bench and seated myself quickly at my desk. Then only, a little late in noticing it, because of my fright, did I observe that our master had on his beautiful green redingote, his fine pleated tie and the cap of black, embroidered silk which he wore only on inspection days and for the distribution of prizes. Moreover, all the other pupils had something extraordinary and solemn in their manner. But that which surprised me most of all was to see, at the farther end of the hall, on benches which were usually empty, the village people seated, silent, like us. Old Hauser was there, with his three-cornered hat; the aged mayor, the letter-carrier, and many others. Everyone there appeared sad. And Hauser had brought an old dog-eared A B C book which he held wide open upon his knees, with his great spectacles laid across its pages.

While I was becoming astonished at all this, Monsieur Hamel had mounted his little platform. And from there, in the same gentle, sweet voice with which he had received me, he said to us:

"My children, this is the last time that I shall hear your lessons. From Berlin the order has come that, henceforth, only German shall be taught in the schools of Alsace and of Lorraine. The new master will arrive tomorrow. Today you have your last lesson in French. I pray you be very attentive."

Such words overwhelmed me. The wretches! So this was what they had fastened to the billboard.

My last lesson in French!

And I could scarcely write. Now I should never be able to learn! I should always have to remain as I was! How I wished now for the lost time, the classes I had skipped to go birds-nesting or sliding on the river Saar! My books, which I had always found so annoying, so heavy to carry, my grammar, my sacred history, seemed to me like old friends whom it would make me very sorry to leave. That was like seeing Monsieur Hamel go. The thought that he was to leave, that I should never see him again, made me forget his punishments, his blows with the ruler.

Poor man!

It is in honor of this last day of school that he has put on his beautiful Sunday clothes. And now I understand why these old people of the village have come to sit at the end of the hall. That means that they are sorry that they have not come oftener to the school. It is also a way of thanking our master for his forty years of good service and of showing their devotion to the father-land which passes away with him.

I was in the midst of my reflections when I heard my name called. It was my turn to recite. What would I not have given to be able to say the whole of that famous rule about the participles, very loud, very clear, without a mistake! But I became confused with the first words and remained standing, leaning against my bench, my heart heavy, not daring to lift my head. I heard Monsieur Hamel, who was speaking to me:

"I will not scold you, my little Frantz. You have had

punishment enough. Behold now what that punishment is. Every day one says:

“‘Bah! I have time enough. I will learn tomorrow.’

“And then you see what happens. . . . Ah! that has been the great misfortune of our Alsace, always to put off its instruction until the next day. Now those people out there are right, those people who say:

“‘How is this? You pretend to be French; and yet you cannot read or write your language!’

“In all this, my poor Frantz, it is not you who is the most to blame. We all have reason to reproach ourselves.

“Your parents have not been sufficiently eager to have you taught. They have preferred, instead, to send you to work in the country or in the spinning-mills, in order to gain a few more sous. And have I nothing with which to reproach myself? Have I not often watered my garden instead of working? And when I wished to go fishing for trout, has it annoyed me to dismiss you?”

Then, from one thing to another, Monsieur Hamel began to talk to us about the French language, saying that it was the most beautiful speech in the world, the clearest, the strongest, that we must keep it among ourselves, and never forget it, because an enslaved people, as long as it keeps its language, is like one who holds the key of his prison.\* Then he took a grammar and read us our lesson. I was astonished to see how I grasped it. All that he was saying seemed easy to me, easy. I believe that I had never listened so well and that he had never had such patience with his explanations. One would have thought that, before going away, the poor man wished to give us everything he knew, to make it all enter our heads at one time.

The lesson finished, we turned to writing. For that day Monsieur Hamel had prepared new copies upon which was written in beautiful round script:

“*France, Alsace, France, Alsace.*”

These seemed like little flags which were floating all around the school-room, fastened to the railings of our desks. You should

\* “He that keeps his mother-tongue keeps the key that shall deliver him from his chains.”—F. Mistral.

have seen how everyone applied himself, and in what silence! Nothing could be heard but the scratching of the pens upon the paper. Once some June bugs flew in, but no one paid any attention, not even the very little children, who had set themselves to tracing their straight lines with a heart, with a conscience, as if that still were French. Upon the roof of the school-house some pigeons were cooing, very low, and I said to myself, while listening to them:

“Will you, too, be obliged to sing in German? You, too?”

From time to time, when I looked up from my page, I saw Monsieur Hamel, motionless in his chair, gazing at everything around him as if he wished forever to remember how his little school-house looked. . . .

Think! For forty years he had been there, in the same place, with his yard before him and his class, always the same. Only the benches and the desks were polished, smoothed by use; the walnut trees in the court had grown large and the hop-vine which he himself had planted engarlanded now the windows, even away up to the room. What heart-breaking grief it meant for the poor man to leave all these things, and to hear his sister, who was going back and forth in the chamber above, getting ready to close up their trunks! For they were to leave the next day, to go away from the country, forever.

Nevertheless, he had the courage to hear our lessons to the end. After the writing, we had the history lesson; then the little ones chanted their BA BE BI BO BU. Down below at the end of the hall, old Hauser had put his spectacles on and, holding his A B C book with both hands, he spelled out the letters with the children. One would have thought that he was learning; he, too. His voice trembled with emotion; and it was so comical to see him that we wanted both to laugh and to cry. Ah! I shall always remember that last lesson. . . .

Suddenly the church bell rang for midday, then the angelus. At the same moment, the trumpets of the Prussians, who were returning from their manoeuvres, sounded through our windows. . . .

Monsieur Hamel arose, very pale, in his desk. Never before had he appeared so tall to me.

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“My friends,” he said, “my friends, I—I—”

But something stifled him. He could not finish.

Then he turned to the blackboard, took a bit of crayon and, bearing on with all his might, wrote, as large as he could:

“ *Vive La France!*”

After that, he remained there, his head leaned against the wall, and, without speaking, with his hand he made a sign which meant:

“The lesson is finished.—Go.”

# Four Hundred and Fifty-Three Love Letters

BY GIOVANNI PAPINI

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN, BY ISAAC GOLDBERG

**I**N the last drawer of my drawer chest, 'way at the bottom, under lock and key, lie four hundred and fifty-three letters from a woman. They are love letters, sent to me, all by the same woman,—by a woman that I haven't loved for a long time, whom I haven't seen in an age and of whose whereabouts I have no notion. Four hundred and fifty-three love letters,—all that remains of a great passion.

That drawer full of letters makes me uneasy. Not that I'm at all sentimental. I am very cold: more the observer than the man of passion. Those letters—ashes of a fire—I have made the subject of an investigation. Everything may be the object of scientific study. And I take this manner of freeing myself from them. Were I to destroy them they would still remain there as the vain sadness of my empty heart.

I began first of all by numbering them one after the other. There are four hundred and fifty-three of them,—neither more nor less. I'm certain of that. I placed them in chronological order: they go from 1903 to 1906. Then I tied them in packets, month by month: January, 1903, four; February, 1903, eighteen; March, 1903, thirty-two, and so forth. Gradually they increase in number; as the months pass by the packets grow thicker and thicker. The largest belongs to June, 1904,—fifty-seven letters. But with 1905 the packets commence to grow thinner, and I come to October, 1906: a single letter, the last, I hope to God!

I have also weighed them: (for even the most spiritual and lyric letters possess, according to post-office employees, a certain weight); I weighed them accurately, a few at a time. They amount, altogether, to 6740 grams: more than six kilograms and a half, almost seven kilograms. Not a bad weight for a love,

and if you had to carry them in a sack all together you wouldn't get very far.

I counted the pages, too, one by one. The number of the pages is awe-inspiring: women write with a facility of which we have no idea. For them, words, whether spoken or written, are not big bills, but small change that may be squandered at will with the most Byronic prodigality. It is true that the woman in question had a very large handwriting and allowed much space between the lines, but none the less it is hard for me to convince myself that in only four hundred and fifty-three letters she was able to write three thousand two hundred and twenty pages. No letter has less than four pages and some go as high as eight, ten, twelve and even sixteen.—I believe if she had had to write all those pages in uninterrupted succession—three thousand two hundred and twenty pages—even if she had been able to write ten per hour it would have taken her three hundred and twenty hours,—in other words, thirty days and thirty nights without stopping. I don't believe that her love, however great, could have been equal to such a test.

I have never been able to summon the patience and the time to count the words and the syllables, but my researches did not stop at this point. I have observed, for instance, that the styles of paper and envelope employed are four in number. Several letters are written upon ordinary coarse, heavy paper, of old, yellow ivory color; others are on parchment style, with long, narrow envelopes to match; others still are on very ugly commercial stock, thin and thready. But the greatest number is written upon light paper, the kind used by the English, enclosed in those deep blue envelopes whose interiors are printed with a grey and black network so that the writing may not be read from the outside. Nor have I overlooked the economic aspect of my collection. All this paper was manufactured, sold at wholesale and then at retail. According to my calculations, which I believe to be fairly exact, since I myself have experimented with various kinds of letter paper, I compute that the sum total cost of the sheets comes to about nineteen *lire* and a few *soldi*. (Somewhat less than four dollars.) That's not a sum to be sniffed at unless you're quite well off. You can do

a lot of things with nineteen *lire*, without buying letter paper. It's enough to purchase at least five French novels with, at three and a half *lire* apiece.

But the cost of the paper is the smallest part. Each of these letters has a stamp on the outside. Of these four hundred and fifty-three letters there are one hundred and twelve that came from distant cities, and three hundred and forty-one that came from the same place where I live. It's a matter, then, of one hundred and twelve stamps at fifteen centimes, which gives a product of sixteen *lire* and eight centimes; then three hundred and forty-one stamps at one *soldo*, which gives a product of seventeen *lire* and five centimes. Adding together the cost of the paper and the stamps it may be seen that the expenses of that poor love-sick woman equal about forty-two *lire*. But how about the ink? In order to write three thousand two hundred and twenty pages you need at least four bottles of ink. Let us suppose that each bottle costs only seventy centimes and the total expense amounts to almost fifty-five *lire*. I believe that the actual cash expense of this love to my correspondent was little more than these fifty-five *lire*, and I'd take my oath that it can't reach sixty. Its actual present value is doubtless much less, almost nothing. Paper that has been written upon is not much in demand on the market and there may be some dealers who'll allow about two *soldi* per kilogram. For my entire collection I shouldn't be able to get more than seventy-five centimes at the most. Clearly it's not worth the trouble of throwing away so poetic a souvenir for so little.

And yet in these letters there is something more—as much for a historian as for a poet—than there was when they were simply so many sheets of paper in the stationery store. There are all the words written upon the paper, all the passion of three years, an enormous number of images, of adjectives and of kisses; there is, in short, a little extract from the inner life of a man and a woman. And all of that doesn't cost anything at all!

I feel perfectly idiotic to be making all these calculations and reflections. But I'm made that way. I'm not a sentimental person. I am an observer of things. When I look at a dead

body I wonder how much the relatives spent for all the medicines that were of no avail, and when a mother weeps I try to compute how many pints of tears she will shed in a day, the hours of night included. What will you have? I'm made that way: I'm not a sentimental man.

And those four hundred and fifty-three love letters under lock and key in the last drawer of my drawer-chest make me uneasy. I don't care to have them there, yet I can't bring myself to burn them. And I've done everything to get them out of my thoughts. I've counted and I've calculated all, yet there's something at the bottom of my heart that whines and groans with restless dissatisfaction. But I pay no attention. For I'm not a sentimental person.

# The Call of Life

BY KNUT HAMSUM

TRANSLATED BY H. S. WEST

MY friend, H —, the journalist, has told me the following story:

Near the harbor of Copenhagen there is a dark boulevard. There are few houses on this street, and scarcely any people pass through it at night. Even in the summer it is seldom frequented.

A few nights ago I happened to walk through this street, when I came upon a young lady. We were alone. The gas lights burned very dimly, so that it was impossible for me to make out her features. "She must be an ordinary street-walker," I said to myself, as I passed on.

Reaching the end of the boulevard, I turned around and retraced my steps. The young lady did likewise, and once more we came face to face. "She is surely waiting for some one," said I. "I am curious to know whom she is waiting for." And once more I passed her.

When I met her for the third time, I took off my hat and addressed her. "Good evening, madam. May I ask if you are waiting for some one?"

She trembled slightly. "Why, no . . . that is, yes, I am waiting for some one."

"Do you mind if I keep you company in the meantime?" I ventured to ask.

"Not at all," she replied, and thanked me very warmly. "As a matter of fact," she continued, "I am not waiting for any one. I have just selected this boulevard for a walk because it is so quiet and pleasant here."

We started to converse about ordinary matters. I offered my arm to her.

"No," she said, shaking her head.

I was becoming bored. It was so dark that I could not see

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her face. I therefore struck a match in order that the light might fall on her while I looked at my watch.

“It is half past nine,” I said.

Again she trembled. Availing myself of this opportunity, I said:

“Do you feel cold? Perhaps you would like to come in to the Tivoli and have something warm to drink?”

“No, it is impossible for me to go anywhere now, as you see,” she replied.

And now I noticed for the first time that she was dressed in mourning.

I excused myself, blaming the darkness for my stupidity. The manner in which she accepted my apology convinced me that she was not an ordinary street-walker.

“Please take my arm,” I urged her, “for I can see that you are cold.”

She took my arm.

We walked back and forth for some time. Finally she asked me to look at my watch again.

“It is past ten,” I said. “May I ask where you live?”

— She named one of the most fashionable streets in the city.

“Will you allow me to escort you home?”

“No, no, you mustn’t do that,” she answered hastily. “You live on the Bredgade, do you not?”

“How do you know that?” I asked in surprise.

“I know who you are,” she replied.

After this we walked in silence. We soon came to the brightly illuminated streets. She walked hurriedly, so that her long black veil fluttered behind her. “Please let us hurry,” she said again and again.

When we came to her door, she turned toward me as if to thank me for escorting her. I opened the door for her. She entered slowly, still looking at me. I followed her. She took my hand. Neither of us spoke.

We walked up to the second story. She opened the door herself, and led me into a dark room. I could hear the ticking of a clock. For a moment she stood near the door in silence.

Then she impetuously threw her arms about me and impressed a warm quivering kiss upon my lips.

"Now please sit down while I light the lamp," she said, and led me to a sofa.

When the lamp had been lighted, I looked about me, confused yet curious. We were in a large, unusually well-furnished living room. I could scarcely believe my eyes. Who was this wonderful creature whom I had met near the harbor and who lived in such a rich apartment?

"Is this your home? Do you live here?" I exclaimed.

"Yes, this is my home," she replied.

"I see," said I. "You are the daughter of this house."

She laughed, saying:

"Not at all. I am an old woman, as you will see presently."

Saying this, she removed her hat and veil.

"There, do you see?" she said, and once more embraced me passionately.

The poor, simple child! At most she looked twenty-two or twenty-three years old. On her right hand she wore a wedding ring. Evidently, therefore, she was married. Pretty? Not exactly. She had too many freckles on her face. Yet she throbbed with life and youth and passion, and her mouth was wonderfully beautiful.

I was about to ask her who she was, and whether she had a husband. I wanted to know in whose house I found myself. But the moment I opened my mouth she embraced me, imploring me not to show any curiosity.

"My name is Ellen," she said. "Would you like to have anything? Please have no fear. Shall I ring for something?"

"Do as you like," I replied.

"Then please go into that bedroom for a moment," she said.

I did as I was told. The reflection of the light in the living room barely enabled me to distinguish the objects in this room. I saw two beds. Ellen rang and ordered some wine. I could hear how the girl brought the wine and left the room again. A moment later Ellen entered the bedroom and remained standing at the door. I took a step toward her. With a half-stifled cry she rushed into my arms. . . . .

That was two nights ago.

The rest of the story? Well, yesterday morning when I awoke, the day was dawning. Ellen, too, opened her eyes. She sighed as though weary and smiled sweetly to me. Her arms were white and soft and smooth as velvet, and her breast was heaving. I whispered something to her, and she closed my mouth with hers, speechless with tenderness. The day grew steadily brighter.

Two hours later I was on my feet. Ellen also rose. She was already dressed, when suddenly I beheld something that even now sends a shudder through my frame. I stood near the wash basin. Ellen had to get something in a side-room; and as she opened the door, I turned around and looked into that room. A chilly breeze flew in through the open windows, and in the middle of the room, on a long table, I saw a corpse, lying in a coffin. It had a long, gray beard. It was the body of an old man. His lean and bony knees were up-raised, like two clenched fists, and his face was sallow and frightful to behold.

I turned away and said nothing.

When Ellen came back I was already dressed and ready to go. I scarcely could return her embrace. She was dressed, as though to accompany me to the door. I allowed her to do as she pleased. Down stairs, in the hallway, she clasped my hand, whispering, "Au revoir!"

"Tomorrow?" I asked.

"No, not tomorrow."

"Why not tomorrow?"

"Hush, dearest! Tomorrow I must go to a funeral. A relative of mine died. There, now, do you know the reason why?"

"But the day after tomorrow?"

"Yes, the day after tomorrow. I will await you here in the hallway. Good-by!"

I went away. . . .

Who was she? And the corpse? How ugly he looked with the clenched fists and the drooping mouth! And the day after tomorrow I was to meet her again. Would I come?

I made straightway for a hotel where I asked for a directory.

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I find the street, the number, and now I know Ellen's last name. Then I buy the morning newspaper in order to see the obituary notices, and I soon find what I am looking for: "After a long illness my husband died yesterday. Age 63."

I sat and pondered for a long time.

A man marries a woman who is forty years younger than he. He is ill for many years and finally on a fine day, he dies. The young widow draws a sigh of relief. The voice of life calls with all its wild and alluring passion. She hears this voice and answers, "I come!" And that same evening she walks on the boulevard. . . .

Ellen, Ellen, I will come! The day after tomorrow!

# Poems

BY GUSTAV DAVIDSON

## APPRECIATION

Singers of our own times,  
You would be still,  
And your luted instruments of song  
Left untouched,  
If we,  
Your listeners,  
Chose not to understand you!

## ALL TO YOU

My heart is capable only of a little bit of kindness,  
A little overflowing.  
I must not squander it on the multitude;  
I must not waste it on the few.  
You love me:—  
I save it up for you!

Oh, I cannot make friends of all the world,  
Nor give to the many that ask for them,  
My golden hours.  
Does not the world see that I cannot serve it,  
And yet be overflowing to an only one?  
How shall I give of the little bit of kindness  
Of which my heart is capable?  
You love me:—  
I give it all to you!

## AFTER A CONCERT

How eloquent your singing was tonight!  
You smote to music, in that single hour,  
All that is beauty, love, devotion, power,  
Shedding on our poor darkness your great light!

### BECALMED

There is nothing my soul yearns to do:  
Neither to go, nor to stay;  
Neither to dream, nor to comprehend things:  
Neither to build up, nor to destroy.  
My soul looks out upon an ocean of mediocrity,  
And the whole world seems without meaning.

### BATTLES LONG AGO

I have been melancholy all day.  
An opera tune from a street-organ  
Drifted in through my study window  
As I sat, reading of battles long ago.

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### Life

BY FANNY BIXBY

*“Life proceeds from death, not death from life.”—Socrates.*

Life is a harder thing to meet than death,  
Life in the whelming glow of joy's full burst,  
The crimson thrill of nature and desire,  
The urge to happiness, the poignant thirst.

To die, to rest, to feel the shadow fall,  
Soft-drooping when the subtle pain has ceased,  
To vibrate with the Spirit beyond space,  
Glimpsing the vision of the soul released;

This is not hard, the ebbing of the tide,  
The cool, pale flow of death's approaching hour,  
But oh, the flood-tide of on-rushing Life,  
Bewildering in its sunder-charge of power.

I have touched death and lingered in its grasp,  
And now from death Life gushes swift and free;  
God of our destinies, God of our stars,  
Gird me to touch Life unresistingly,

To rush with Truth in the wild flood of joy,  
As I have sped with Truth in agony,  
To rise with mind full-sinewed to meet Life,  
As I have faced the vast death-mystery.

## Blue Canyon

By GUY BOGART

Miles upon miles of living atmosphere  
In coerulean stretch,  
Limitless, sublime, divine!  
Sky and earth in eternal embrace  
Of blue beauty.  
Far, far below those rugged canyon walls  
With splashing flow the river runs.  
In silence of this infinite temple  
I heard with etheric sense The Voice,  
And my spirit with vibratory harmony  
Visioned life's hidden meaning.  
Giant pines, rulers of the Sierras,  
Lifted high and straight their graceful pillars,  
In union of strength and beauty,  
And from their topmost reach  
Comrade breezes talked with me.  
One with Sun and Trees,  
And one with sentient Air,  
I nor thought nor reasoned,  
But, feeling with all Nature,  
Blended my ego with the pines.  
Flew my unleashed soul,  
Looking into azure eyes of God,

Listening to His voice, the wind;  
Feeling His fire, the solic rays;  
And, by this trinity enmeshed,  
I bowed not in worship, but stood erect.

## White Sisters

BY LEO ROBBINS

White sisters  
Come to me at night.  
They stroke my hair,  
Pat my cheeks  
And comfort me. ....  
My gentle angels!  
They vanish  
As I ope my eyes.

I lie in the void of slumber.  
Who am I?

I'm not a wounded soldier,  
Nor a sinner, repentant.  
I am only a wounded soul. ....

And out of the night  
A wonderful white angel comes to me  
And dries my eyes.  
Ah! Little white sister!

But I am awake.  
It is the cold, white pillow  
Drinking my tears. ....  
So the little white sisters come to me,—  
My gentle angels!

# The Jest

By PAUL ELDRIDGE

## PERSONS

MONSIEUR SEVIGNE  
MONSIEUR LABRANCHE  
MONSIEUR AIGLON  
Mlle. FINETTE  
Mlle. ANDRÉE  
JEAN

*In the summer-home of M. SEVIGNE. It is early afternoon. Mlle. ANDRÉE lies outstretched upon the lounge, smoking a long cigarette. The others are all around a card-table playing cards.*

LABRANCHE (*Throwing down his cards*): All my money on this. And I hope to the devil that I lose! I am sick of playing and playing and playing.

AIGLON (*Dealing more cards*): We all hope as well that you will lose.

LABRANCHE: You misers! That's all your friendship amounts to — rob one another.

SEVIGNE: Come, come, Labranche, why insult? You carry your cynicism to extremes.

Mlle. FINETTE: He is angry he is lucky at cards, for then he is naturally unlucky at love.

LABRANCHE: Love! Love! Let the virgins talk of love!

AIGLON: Come friends, turn your cards.

(*All look anxiously.*)

LABRANCHE: To the devil with your cards! I have won again, and therefore I must play again. It's like stupid life. You are hungry, and you eat, and you eat, and you think it will be sufficient, but soon you are hungry again and you eat again, and again.

SEVIGNE: Don't worry, my friend, there will come a time when you shall no longer be hungry and you shall no longer eat.

(*Laughter.*)

Mlle. FINETTE: I wager he spends many an hour thinking in bitterness over that time.

AIGLON: Confirmed cynics fear death much more intensely than sensible people.

LABRANCHE: I admire your division between sensible people and cynical people. In other words he is sensible who says his Pater

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Noster daily, and believes that the sun really sets, like some weary traveler—

SEVIGNE: Now, gentlemen, postponing for a moment questions of philosophy, will you deal cards, Aiglon?

(*Cards are dealt.*)

AIGLON: But truly, it seems that luck strikes him who dodges it.

LABRANCHE: Do you mean me?

(*Laughter.*)

AIGLON: Of course. I don't mean myself, who have lost three-quarters of what I had.

LABRANCHE: Then I am lucky. Why lucky? Outside is beautiful May with flowers and birds and little children, and I sit here like a madman, playing, playing, playing.

MILLE. FINETTE: If you are so romantic, Monsieur, why don't you leave us and go to your beautiful May?

ALL (*Applauding*): Good! Good! Mlle. Finette has well said.

LABRANCHE: You blockheads, how can a man leave while he still has money—and—luck? Does a man die when he is happy and cheerful, and in full bloom? Doesn't he wait till he is a rag and a disgust?

SEVIGNE: Cheerful companion you are, Labranche, to have invited here in friendly company.

LABRANCHE: Please not to invite me again.

MILLE. FINETTE: If the gentlemen persist—

ALL: Please! Please!

SEVIGNE: Labranche and I are cradle-friends, and I know him too well to be angry at what he says. You don't know the heart that beats against that chest. It is noble.

LABRANCHE: You mean the stomach. You are forgetting physiology. It is the stomach that is noble or ignoble.

AIGLON: Watch your cards, please.

LABRANCHE: Half of my money on this.

AIGLON: Why not all of it, while you are at it, and get rid of it, perhaps?

LABRANCHE: I shall want to play again afterwards, do you understand? Once more and again, and once more—

MILLE. FINETTE: I repeat it's disappointed love.

LABRANCHE: What a vulgar combination of words! As if all love is not disappointment. (*Cards are uncovered.* LABRANCHE wins again.)

LABRANCHE: Damnable things! Some people are indeed fortunate, for when they have already taken poison, and cut their throats, and stabbed their chests, some charitable individual shall find them, and have them bandaged, and cured, that they may be compelled to repeat the ordeal. (*Throws cards away.*) I won't play any more.

AIGLON: So that's the game and the philosophy of it! Win all you can, pretend to be angry, and don't tempt luck any longer!

LABRANCHE: How much did the gentleman lose?

SEVIGNE: Please, gentlemen —

LABRANCHE: How much did he lose? He shall get back his money with interest.

MILLE. FINETTE: I forbid your quarrelling, gentlemen. I demand this as the privilege of my sex.

LABRANCHE: As one of the innumerable privileges, you mean.

(*Laughter.*)

SEVIGNE: He would never miss such an opportunity of expressing his feelings about certain matters. (*He slaps him upon the back.* LABRANCHE is forced to smile.)

SEVIGNE: Congratulate me, please, I have conquered the unconquerable.

MILLE. FINETTE (*Rising*): I think I've had enough of this game as well.

SEVIGNE: Yes, let's stop. Our nerves are on their edges. (*They all rise.*) And now I propose we drink one another's health, despite opinions held, for we know that in our hearts of hearts, we are, and will always remain, friends.

LABRANCHE: Reserving, of course, to ourselves the meaning of that delectable word.

SEVIGNE (*Squeezing LABRANCHE's arm*): You are the best of all friends despite your irony. (*To the rest.*) If I dared to tell you all the noble deeds of this bitter-worded but sweet-minded man, you would know why I tolerate him, nay, love him!

LABRANCHE: You are mad, Sevigne.

SEVIGNE: Madness in such a case, then, is the gift of the gods. (*Turning to MILLE. ANDRÉE.*) And Mlle. Andrée is still meditating? (*Walks over to her.*) Unconcerned about our petty rivalries and opinions?

MILLE. ANDRÉE: A — H'm, h'm.

(AIGLON is pouring the champagne into glasses, and serves. MILLE. ANDRÉE sits up.)

SEVIGNE: I drink to the health of all present!

ALL: To yours!

LABRANCHE (*Smacking his lips*): Too sweet.

AIGLON: I thought it was impolite to criticize.

SEVIGNE: We shall excuse our friend, Aiglon, his tastes are so highly strung that the least deviation from perfection gives him pain. Come now, Labranche, have I diagnosed your case of impoliteness?

LABRANCHE: Impoliteness? Perhaps Mlle. Finette shall call it disappointed politeness as she did disappointed love?

MILLE. ANDRÉE (*Stretches and yawns*): How dull!

MILLE. FINETTE (*Takes her around*): Another cynic.

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MLLE. ANDRÉE: How should one not be a cynic, with nothing to do, nothing to think of?

MLLE. FINETTE: What, haven't you been thinking all this time?

MLLE. ANDRÉE (*Laughing*): Thinking? And what should I think about, pray?

SEVIGNE: There are so many beautiful things in life.

MLLE. ANDRÉE: Whenever I want to think, unconsciously, unwillingly, my thoughts revert to my business —

LABRANCHE: Your art, Mlle. Is not acting an art?

MLLE. ANDRÉE: Nothing is art behind the screen, particularly theatrical scenes, sir.

LABRANCHE (*Ironically*): Ah!

(AIGLON has meanwhile refilled the glasses. They drink. There is a visible cheering up.)

SEVIGNE (*Sentimentally*): Oh, well, I don't think life is quite so bad, as some would have it. Of course, when things go against you —

AIGLON: Or luck is too much on your side — (*All laugh, a little stupidly.*)

MLLE. FINETTE: I feel like dancing. I am already in the air, only my feet still hang down. Who will dance with a pretty young lady?

ALL MEN: I! I!

MLLE. FINETTE: Even the cynic!

SEVIGNE (*Bowing the lowest*): Shall I not be the first privileged character? (MLLE. FINETTE bows, and they dance, as MLLE. FINETTE sings. AIGLON bows to MLLE. ANDRÉE, and they also dance. LABRANCHE watches them.)

LABRANCHE: Don't turn so rapidly. You get me dizzy.

AIGLON: Don't look sir, turn your face.

LABRANCHE: But I like to look. The women seem like colored breezes turning upon flower stalks —

MLLE. FINETTE: Hear! Hear!

MLLE. ANDRÉE: A poet, forsooth!

LABRANCHE (*Continuing*): The men like stilts hanging in the winds.

SEVIGNE: You should dance too, and you would have no reason to be jealous.

MLLE. FINETTE: Monsieur can use a chair for a partner.

LABRANCHE: Jealous! You have quite a lexicon here! Disappointed love, disappointed politeness, jealousy — (LABRANCHE pours a glass for himself, and drinks. Exhausted, they all fall into seats, and breathe heavily.)

AIGLON (*Pours champagne, and serves*): Drink, and be merry!

MLLE. FINETTE: Oh, have you heard, my friends, of Mlle. Barrie?

ALL: No, no — what is it?

MLLE. FINETTE: Ha, ha, she eloped!

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ALL (*Disappointed*): We all know that.

MILLE. FINETTE: Well, and is that nothing at all to you? A woman runs away with a man, breaks all codes of etiquette—and you—

MILLE. ANDRÉE: We thought you'd say something more interesting.

SEVIGNE: Elopement is an every-day affair.

AIGLON: In fact, if I mistake not, it's an honor. I should never marry, for instance, without the pleasurable scandal of an elopement.

LABRANCHE: Divorce—divorce—is the only interesting affair in the realm of man, because then the idea of torture and pain is included into the bargain.

SEVIGNE: After all, elopement is but a pleasurable sensation.

AIGLON: But this—this—you have never heard. Only the gentlemen—(*He takes LABRANCHE and SEVIGNE aside, and whispers into their ears.* SEVIGNE *laughs heartily*, LABRANCHE *smiles*.)

AIGLON: See, even Labranche

MILLE. FINETTE: Tell us, too. This is not right.

MILLE. ANDRÉE: Do tell us.

(SEVIGNE and AIGLON *laugh heartily again*.)

AIGLON: Tell them, Sevigne.

SEVIGNE: Let Labranche tell them.

LABRANCHE (*Makes ready to tell them*): Why—

SEVIGNE (*Stopping him*): What ails you, man?

AIGLON: Take care, Labranche.

LABRANCHE (*To the ladies*): See, they won't let me tell you. But I must acknowledge it's really interesting,—far more so than either an elopement or a divorce.

MILLE. ANDRÉE: Whatever is interesting is not for us. And I am dying, I tell you dying, of ennui. Is there nothing you can do to dispel this terrible monotony?

LABRANCHE (*Sarcastically*): Let's play cards.

SEVIGNE: I understand very well how monotonous the country may become to a city-person.

LABRANCHE: Let us dance.

AIGLON (*Sarcastically*): I say, Sevigne, perhaps May flowers—and—children—

LABRANCHE: Or gossip—

MILLE. ANDRÉE (*As though continuing LABRANCHE'S statement*): Or your incessant irony, M. Labranche, which you think so wonderful.

(*All laugh*.)

LABRANCHE: Or your wit, Mademoiselle.

AIGLON: I propose that we make love.

MILLE. ANDRÉE: Not with me.

MILLE. FINETTE: Nor with me.

AIGLON: Then with Labranche, of course. (*There is laughter*.)

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*Then a moment of silence. Then one yawns, one breathes deeply.*  
MILLE. ANDRÉE walks to the window-sill, and looks out.)

LABRANCHE (Imitating SEVIGNE): I don't think life is quite so bad.

SEVIGNE: Even monotony is enjoyable. (*He takes a cigarette from the case, and smokes it. Suddenly MILLE. ANDRÉE shouts out, cheerfully.*)

MILLE. ANDRÉE: I have it! I have it!

ALL (Turning to her): What is it?

MILLE. ANDRÉE: We shall act.

ALL (Disappointed): Act — act —

LABRANCHE: The wonderful thing!

AIGLON: The newly-found anodyne.

MILLE. ANDRÉE: A real play — a real play!

LABRANCHE: What is a real play?

SEVIGNE: No acting, please.

MILLE. FINETTE: Acting!

MILLE. ANDRÉE: I mean a little life. No stage-business, we have enough of that. Colored life —

SEVIGNE: Tell us more about it then, perhaps —

MILLE. FINETTE: Hurry dear, I am so anxious.

MILLE. ANDRÉE (Pointing out of the window): See! See!

ALL: What? What?

MILLE. ANDRÉE: Dullards! Don't you see the gardener plucking flowers

MILLE. FINETTE: April fool! This is May, my dear.

AIGLON: Another one poetically inclined.

SEVIGNE: May with flowers and children.

LABRANCHE: Back to cards, ladies and gentlemen, — that is real, colored life.

AIGLON: Some people would make money —

MILLE. ANDRÉE (To all): Listen — I am going to make love to him. (Pointing out of the window.) I'll propose to elope with him.

SEVIGNE: What do you mean? With Jean, my gardener?

MILLE. ANDRÉE: Listen — I'll call him up — make him love me — propose to elope — and then when he shall be at my feet, elated — you come out of there — behind that screen where you shall be hidden. Well — well — let us act upon the spur of the moment. Must we always prepare everything in advance? Things will develop by themselves. Now hide, — but there must be silence, absolute silence — and perhaps you can peep through those crevices — and see how well a gardener can love.

SEVIGNE: I fear that Jean is too clever not to understand.

MILLE. ANDRÉE: No man is clever.

MILLE. FINETTE: What we have seen, ha, ha!

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AIGLON: Capital idea! Capital! Notice that Labranche says nothing, which means that he is delighted.

MILLE. ANDRÉE: Now hurry! Get ready! While the inspiration is on me, and while Jean is still at hand.

MILLE. FINETTE: Wonderful idea! Shall you need me—for a triangle?

MILLE. ANDRÉE: No, no—just a love—idyll, with a brisk awakening.

(All laugh, while they hide.)

MILLE. ANDRÉE: Are you ready, all?

ALL: Yes, yes.

MILLE. ANDRÉE (Calling out of the window): M. Jean! M. Jean. (She bows and makes sign to the gardener.)

MILLE. ANDRÉE: Yes—a rose—a rose—if you please—that's right.

MILLE. FINETTE (Sticking her head out of the partition): Well, does it work?

SEVIGNE: Be sure you make us laugh.

LABRANCHE: Be careful. Gardeners have really pleased ladies.

MILLE. FINETTE: Won't it be a real jest if she should fall in love, and—

MILLE. ANDRÉE: Sh! Stop your chatter, and hide. He is coming. (JEAN appears. He is about twenty or twenty-two years old, well-built, and handsome. He keeps his hat in one hand, and a rose in the other.)

JEAN (Bowing): This is the most beautiful, Mlle.

MILLE. ANDRÉE (Taking it, smelling it, looking at it delighted): Yes—beautiful indeed—thank you—thank you very much, Monsieur Jean. (JEAN bows, and makes to go.)

MILLE. ANDRÉE: Don't go yet. I like to ask you some things about roses.

JEAN: At your orders, Mlle.

MILLE. ANDRÉE: How late do you have them here?

JEAN: It depends upon the weather. Sometimes till August, sometimes much later.

MILLE. ANDRÉE: And do they always have this same delightful perfume?

JEAN: Oh yes, they keep the perfume.

MILLE. ANDRÉE: Don't you believe a flower's perfume is its best part?

JEAN: I don't know, Mlle. I guess the perfume and the looks as well.

MILLE. ANDRÉE (Smells again the rose): How beautiful indeed!

JEAN: Mlle. seems to like flowers much more than most people who live in large cities like Paris.

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MLLE. ANDRÉE (*Sweetly*): Why do you say that?

JEAN: Because whenever Monsieur has visitors here from Paris, they hardly ever ask for flowers, and when they take them, they pin them to their waists, and seem to forget they hang there.

MLLE. ANDRÉE (*Laughing*): How sharp you are! And you have noticed that?

JEAN: Why not? It isn't so hard to notice it. City folks like gaiety,—and there isn't much gaiety in a flower—that is for some.

MLLE. ANDRÉE (*Laughing*): For some, it's true—but I love flowers.

JEAN: If Monsieur will allow me, I shall make a beautiful bouquet for Mlle. when you leave.

MLLE. ANDRÉE: Thank you very much indeed, M. Jean. I shall be happy to get it, and Monsieur, I hope will permit you.

JEAN (*Bows*): Thank you. (*He makes to go.*)

MLLE. ANDRÉE: Don't go yet. Are you in a special hurry?

JEAN: Not if Mlle. wishes me to remain.

MLLE. ANDRÉE: I've been thinking it must be a great pleasure to make flowers grow.

JEAN (*Smiling*): I don't make them grow.

MLLE. ANDRÉE: I mean to tend them, to take care of them.

JEAN: It's very hard work, much harder than city-folk imagine.

MLLE. ANDRÉE: What, is it possible that you feel your work too hard, and that you would prefer coming to the City?

JEAN: Well, who knows, perhaps.

MLLE. ANDRÉE: Come, you have been standing all this time. Won't you care to sit down a while with me. The rest of the people have gone upstairs into the salon, and I should like company.

JEAN (*Awkwardly, blushing*): If Mlle. wishes me,—I don't dare to— (*He seats himself on the margin of the chair.*)

MLLE. ANDRÉE (*Filling glasses*): Won't you have a drink?

JEAN: Monsieur might not like it.

MLLE. ANDRÉE: He would not know it. They will be away for some time. (*She clinks glasses. They drink.*)

JEAN (*A little gayer*): Yes, I should think life so much gayer at Paris.

MLLE. ANDRÉE: Have you never been there?

JEAN: Never.

MLLE. ANDRÉE: Life is gayer there—much gayer—for some.

JEAN: Not for all?

MLLE. ANDRÉE: For many more it is sadder. People have no flowers, no birds, no—

JEAN: But they say the streets are lit all the time like bonfires. And there are ladies and gentlemen by the thousands—and people laugh—and—

MLLE. ANDRÉE: Sometimes.

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JEAN: Certainly life is gay for Mlle.

MILLE. ANDRÉE: Why for me?

JEAN: Because on the stage people are always gay.

MILLE. ANDRÉE: Oh, no, no. You are quite mistaken. The stage is crowded with sad people.

JEAN: With sad people?

MILLE. ANDRÉE: Yes.

JEAN: I had never thought so.

MILLE. ANDRÉE (*Sighs*): Yes, yes. (*Pours glasses again.*) Please have another glass.

JEAN: I really don't — dare.

MILLE. ANDRÉE: Come, don't be afraid. See, this is the difference between city people and you. In the city one dares — everything. (*They drink.*) One dares always. There isn't that terrible distinction between master and servant.

JEAN (*Much gayer.*) No distinction. Is it possible?

MILLE. ANDRÉE: Quite so.

JEAN (*Laughing*): They are — like — friends?

MILLE. ANDRÉE: Not always — not exactly — but still — the servant is not afraid.

JEAN: That's good.

MILLE. ANDRÉE: If for instance, a lady like me, should fall in love with her servant or — gardener —

JEAN: No, Mlle.

MILLE. ANDRÉE: Why not? What wrong is there? Are not we all men and women? It's only money that — (*JEAN looks about disturbed.*)

MILLE. ANDRÉE: What's the trouble?

JEAN: I thought I heard Monsieur's voice. He would not like it, I am sure. (*Makes ready to rise.*)

MILLE. ANDRÉE (*Motions him to sit down*): You were mistaken, they won't be down for some time yet. They are examining a new painting.

JEAN: You know Monsieur is rather strict. I never dare to touch a thing.

MILLE. ANDRÉE: Now, Monsieur Jean, this is exactly why country-folk are never liked. They are always afraid. Supposing your master should come in, and find you sitting here — what of it? We can always tell him that I was asking you about the flowers — or something of that sort.

JEAN: Yes, as Mlle. says.

MILLE. ANDRÉE: Surely you don't always have the opportunity of sitting with such a lady as I.

JEAN: Never — never — that's why I don't dare.

MILLE. ANDRÉE: Learn to be a city man, and dare all!

JEAN: It seems like a dream.

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MLLE. ANDRÉE: Don't you smoke? (*She hands him the cigarette case and they both smoke. There is a moment's silence. MLLE. ANDRÉE pretends to look at the smoke, but she really watches JEAN'S every movement with the corner of her eye. JEAN forgets more and more and more his environment, and smiles and sighs alternatively.*)

MLLE. ANDRÉE: As I was saying, M. Jean, in the city one falls in love without caring a particle for circumstances, for conditions in life. Rich and poor, old and young, mistress and servant —

JEAN: Rich and poor?

MLLE. ANDRÉE: Oh, very often.

JEAN: It must be wonderful for the poor to become rich, and have servants about him, and champagne, and such fine cigarettes, and to dress and walk like the real rich.

MLLE. ANDRÉE: Don't you think it's better for a rich woman to make a poor man happy?

JEAN: Yes, indeed, Mlle. For sure you don't know what an awful life a poor person leads. And when he sees such beautiful ladies — once in a long while — like you — and he thinks that when he shall marry, he shall have to take to wife some fool woman that can't lift her eyes to him, and smells always of onions and the wet earth, not of flowers — like you — Mlle.

MLLE. ANDRÉE (*Smiling*): You are complimenting, M. Jean.

JEAN (*Not heeding her remark*): I know our women, Mlle. There isn't one whose skin isn't like leather that you wear on your shoes.

MLLE. ANDRÉE (*Laughing, pouring out wine, which they drink without more ado*): That's what I always thought. These country girls must be repulsive to a man.

JEAN: And so they are, Mlle. How can they help it? They are like potatoes that grow in the earth. They see nothing, they hear nothing. They just get you children — a lot of them — so that half can die, and you still have enough.

MLLE. ANDRÉE (*Roguishly*): Tell me, M. Jean, have you ever loved, that you know so well about these things?

JEAN (*Hot with wine*): Mlle. wishes to jest asking me about this. How can my love interest her?

MLLE. ANDRÉE: Indeed, I am not jesting. Why should I jest?

JEAN: If Mlle. really cares to know —

MLLE. ANDRÉE: Of course — of course.

JEAN: I have never loved, except in dreams.

MLLE. ANDRÉE: So?

JEAN: No. I have never loved, but I have always dreamt.

MLLE. ANDRÉE (*Coquettishly*): Tell me your dream — do — please. What sort of a girl did you dream of?

JEAN: Mlle. makes fun of me.

MLLE. ANDRÉE: Not at all, not at all. Tell me — do.

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JEAN: Well — it's always — a lady — a beautiful lady from the city — as beautiful as — you.

Mlle. ANDRÉE (*Laughing*): As I? As I?

JEAN: Forgive me, Mlle. but I have never seen a more beautiful lady than you.

Mlle. ANDRÉE (*Half-angrily*): M. Jean!

JEAN: I told you — you would not care —

Mlle. ANDRÉE: Indeed I do. A lady as beautiful as I — and —

JEAN: And we always run away far from here — to a castle and there I suddenly throw off my clothes, and appear — a prince — and surprise my love by my beauty and courage, for I have to fight against all sorts of wild beasts.

Mlle. ANDRÉE: And — do you — hope to have that dream realized some day?

JEAN (*Sighing*): No, Mlle. Because dreams never come true. They go by opposites. So whenever I'd dream my dream, Monsieur would be sure to wake me up more rudely than usual, and Catherine, the pock-marked girl would cross my path smiling longer than ever.

Mlle. ANDRÉE (*Laughing*): Catherine the pock-marked. And is she supposed to be your betrothed?

JEAN: People speak about it, and when people speak about a thing, it must come true, if you want to or not.

Mlle. ANDRÉE (*Touching his shoulder*): Poor boy! Catherine the pock-marked when he dreams of his princess!

JEAN: But I shall never marry her, never! (*A little dizzy from the wine, he strikes the table.*) I'd rather die with my dream!

Mlle. ANDRÉE: Die with the dream of a bride — as beautiful as — I —

JEAN: Please, Mlle. don't take it amiss. I didn't mean to —

Mlle. ANDRÉE (*Haughtily*): What, you saw one more beautiful than I? And will you turn your back on me?

JEAN: I don't understand, Mlle. I don't.

Mlle. ANDRÉE (*Rising*.) You said you would be faithful to your dream, and now already, you regret it. You excuse yourself for it.

JEAN (*Bewildered*): No, Mlle. no. I don't dare. I have dared too much. If my master —

Mlle. ANDRÉE: For shame, your master! What has your master to do with your dreams — you would fight wild beasts for your princess?

JEAN: Nothing, Mlle. except that he always wakes me up from them.

Mlle. ANDRÉE (*More softly, almost dreamily*): Then — listen — I, too, have had a dream these years. I dreamt I loved a peasant — a young and handsome peasant like you —

JEAN: Like me — (*He is stunned, and listens with mouth open, unable to budge.*)

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MILLE. ANDRÉE: Like you — a handsomer peasant I have never known. And I dreamt that one day or other I would meet him in truth, and he would love me, and take me away from the city — far — far away — into some lonely cabin — and marry me, and be faithful to me to the end of our life which would come to us both at the same hour.

JEAN (*Repeats automatically*): Like me — like me —

MILLE. ANDRÉE: No, not like you — but you *yourself* — you the prince of my dreams.

JEAN (*Rising, almost shrieking*): Mlle! Mlle! Why will you mock me? Why? (*He wishes to run out.*)

MILLE. ANDRÉE: Stop! Will you wake me from my dream? I don't mock you. My love — I don't.

JEAN (*Stops, dizzy*): Mlle!

MILLE. ANDRÉE (*Puts forth her hand*): Your princess, if you want her.

JEAN (*Takes her hand, and kisses it many times, and murmurs*): My dream — Mlle. — my dream! (*She withdraws her hand. He rubs his face, his eyes.*)

MILLE. ANDRÉE: Shall our dream come true? Do you wish it now when it may become a reality?

JEAN: I can't understand, not at all. (*He looks about him.*) This is my master's room — this is the furniture — there is the rose I brought you a little while ago — and yourself, more beautiful than in my dreams — and still — I can't understand — not at all.

MILLE. ANDRÉE: Then you did not dream your dream long enough, or else nothing should surprise you, as nothing surprises me.

JEAN: Oh yes, I have dreamt it long enough.

MILLE. ANDRÉE: Then you love me — my prince?

JEAN (*Falls at her feet, and kisses them*): My princess!

MILLE. ANDRÉE: One other thing before we may leave. Tell me, what if instead of carrying you off to my castle, you shall find that I am a poor actress, that I have nothing to offer you save myself, that perhaps Catherine the pock-marked girl has more money, can cook better, would take care of you better than I, would you still —

JEAN (*Still at her feet*): My princess! My princess!

MILLE. ANDRÉE: Not a princess, but a poor girl, poorer than Catherine.

JEAN: Don't — don't speak of her — my princess! I shall labor for you, I shall raise flowers for you, I shall be your slave, and the little hut that I shall build for you, shall be a more beautiful castle than the one I have dreamt of. Come with me! (*There is a noise and a bustle behind the partition. JEAN remains stiffened in his place, as the company rushes out of its hiding-place, laughing and applauding.*)

ALL: Bravo! Fine! Great!

MILLE. FINETTE: Romeo is declaring love to Juliet.

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LABRANCHE: Perhaps it's only the shoemaker measuring Cinderella's little foot.

SEVIGNE (*Severely*): Jean, go to the stable, and clean the horses, then into my room, and brush my riding suit. (*JEAN cannot stir.*)

SEVIGNE: Hurry, or you lose your job, sir! (*JEAN rises, weakened, aged, then looks for a second at Mlle. ANDRÉE, who has remained still and stony; and then as if suddenly struck in the head, he covers it, and shouts:*)

JEAN: My dream! My dream! My dream! (*Shouting in this fashion, he staggers out.*)

AIGLON (*Imitating*): My dream! My dream! My dream!

ALL (*To Mlle. ANDRÉE*): Brava! Brava!

LABRANCHE: I must congratulate you, Mlle. upon your art of improvisation. Marvelous! You make love diabolically.

SEVIGNE: Better than a play, much better.

AIGLON: To think that these boors dream of ladies, and princesses and castles.

SEVIGNE: He is always a dreamy fellow. I think I shall get rid of him.

AIGLON: Catherine the pock-marked girl. Ha, ha!

Mlle. FINETTE: I think it were well if we could stage this.

SEVIGNE: It would lose its effect. It is the suddenness and the unexpectedness of it all that made it so interesting.

LABRANCHE: Don't you think a great deal of it is due to his having drunk champagne and smoked perfumed cigarettes? They generally induce dreams of his sort.

Mlle. FINETTE: A gold piece for you, Monsieur, if you ever say a pleasant thing about anything or anybody.

LABRANCHE (*To Mlle. FINETTE*): Maybe Mlle. thinks that her dreams are brought down from Heaven upon the wings of white little cherubim that kiss her upon the lips.

SEVIGNE: It sounded so true. One might have thought Mlle. Andrée herself had really felt it all.

AIGLON: That's where her supreme talent became evident.

LABRANCHE: A woman intoxicates herself with words, a man with wine, do you understand?

SEVIGNE: Now Mlle. Andrée, for having so wonderfully entertained us, we shall motor to Paris. We can get there by midnight — and — (*At this moment there is heard the report of a gun from a room upon the second floor. There is a sudden stillness among the people.*)

SEVIGNE: The fool! He must have used my new revolver — the only one loaded.

Mlle. FINETTE (*Very much scared*): Do you think he —

LABRANCHE: Why this surprise, Mlle? Your sex has caused many such a finis to our sex — whether it was all serious or in jest.

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AIGLON: Let's go up and see.

MILLE. FINETTE: I am afraid.

LABRANCHE: Come, please— (*Takes her arm.*)

SEVIGNE: The fool!

(*They all leave, except MILLE. ANDRÉE. She shivers, moves to a chair, looks at the rose for a minute, then breaks into sobs.*)

CURTAIN

# The Lost Lenore

BY BURTON KLINE

Author of "In The Open Code," "The Eviction," "The Point of Collision," etc., etc.

**O**N a night in February — the month, by the way, the most frequent in suicides — there came to me a young woman with a letter from my friend Dr. Viall.

For one reason or another that evening I had sat up rather later than is common even with me. It must have been verging on twelve and I was alone, mooning over a fire in my study that Ishui had laid for me more against the gloom than against the chill of the night. And I seem to see now something foreordained in the providence that kept me up, not so much against my will as without any willing at all. It was as if I were waiting, and I remember that even to my skeptic mind the air was full of a faint foreboding. A light fog filling the street gave the houses across the way the look of expectant gray ghosts, peering at me with their lights veiled by the mist and now flickering out one by one, as the hours passed, like disappointed eyes sleepily, sadly closed. A thin drizzle of rain pattered down, for all the world like the tears of an inexhaustible grief, making mournful music on the panes. In such weather one easily comprehends the sombre reputation of the month. Imperturbable Ishui himself had felt its pall upon him.

"You will not be going out for your walk tonight, Sir?"

"No, Ishui. I'm afraid the night has got on my nerves."

"I am glad, Sir," he sighed. And I wonder yet if the wily Oriental had not a purpose in his slip. Had he too felt something, and was relieved to find me sharing the sensation? Yet his face was as fixed as an image, and I sent him to his room. The night looked out through that face of his.

Stretched before me on the rug, between my feet and the fender, the lean, lazy, somnolent gray Angora alone mustered ability to ignore the spell of the weather. I envied him his

padded nerves, his exquisite indifference. Now and again he opened an eye, and, having freshly assured himself that I was there, he calmly closed it again. The trivial act stood out almost sensationly against the stillness of the house and the brooding mood of the night. The book on my knee had slipped to the floor, symbollically enough. Its author had fallen flat. Even the pipe drooping from my lips gave up its smoke with grudging. Or perhaps I had forgotten to smoke. I was thinking — thinking of — I'm afraid I was lonely.

Surely this was "upon a midnight dreary." And tailing in upon me on the heels of that idle fancy, the half forgotten words of the poem began to string themselves together, when —

The rattling ring of the bell in the hall fell upon the silence like the crash of a cannon. Even the cat leaped to life at the electric shock.

Certainly the stage could not have been more fitly set for her entrance.

Without troubling to glance at the annunciator, I assumed that callers at such an hour must be front door visitors, and I answered the ring myself. She entered. Without a word, without a sound from her dripping feet, she entered as if her visit had been long expected. Not until her steamy raincoat had been laid aside, her overshoes removed, and my caller had been escorted to the warmth of my study, did either of us speak a word. It was she who spoke the first one.

"My name is Chalmer. Eleanora Chalmer," she said in a voice husky and hollow from some nervous tension.

"I am glad to see you, Miss Chalmer." My lips uttered the phrase, empty as it was, without direction, so busy was I in study of her appearance.

It may have been only the whim of the night, and the train of fancies it induced, and I smiled as I caught it in the face and figure of Eleanora Chalmer; but there it was, the raven resemblance. A black and peaked hat covered most of her hair, but from the pads of it about her ears I saw that it was black. So were her eyes. Her features still retained relics of a former beauty, but illness had sharpened them till the nose had acquired an unmistakable point, and her eyes had owlish rings

about them. Even the name — Eleanora — suited the odd association.

“Be seated, please, Miss Chalmer.” I fear the invitation came late, out of my rapt abstraction. “What may I do for you?”

In silence, the silence of a very evident distress, she handed me the letter from Viall, and in silence she seated herself, perched herself, in a prim straight-backed chair, and folded her hands in her lap, with her gaze fixed straight before her.

Suddenly, whilst I was reading — with the suddenness of her ring at my bell — Miss Chalmer shivered and fell back in the chair, choking out scarcely intelligible words. I flew to support her, and spoke to her, but she drew away and declined assistance, or seemed not to hear. Only her eyes responded, with a heart-rending look of appeal. They had the look of the haunted. The seizure had come of no physical pain, but more as if some tyrannous and torturing recollection had trailed her, and found her there, and even in this last place of refuge had pounced upon its victim.

In a moment the tremor passed, and my visitor was again the prim occupant of a prim chair, motionless and noncommittal.

The lateness of her call, of course, had its meaning. People who seek me out at such an hour are driven by dread. And Eleanora Chalmer had come to me with the strangest set of disabilities I can recall in all the years of my practice. From the letter she handed me I learned of Viall that at irregular intervals, usually at moments of excitement, Miss Chalmer was unable to speak or swallow. At the same time her right arm fell helpless to her side. And hearing failed her in her left ear. These things I set down exactly, detached and even humorous as they appear, because for me they had at once a definite and a mournful meaning. Any one with afflictions such as those has had, in his time or hers, an experience equivalent to a lost *Lenore*.

I wonder if Miss Chalmer caught the glance that escaped me as I learned this. I believe I could, if I wished, specialize in cases such as hers. However —

In years I should set her down at twenty-seven; and her occupation in life at the time, so I gathered from Viall, consisted in clinging to the good nature of a maker of optical instruments, who made shift to employ this pitiful human wreck as a secretary. No one before me had guessed the secret of her ailment. Of course Miss Chalmer had consulted an aurist, who treated her deaf ear, and left it deaf. A doctor who "specialized" in nerves had gone over her arm with an electric needle. Another had swabbed her stiffened throat with soothing mixtures. In the end they had given her up as hopeless, or unprofitable, or perhaps as simply uninteresting. In some fashion she had puzzled or alarmed one of them sufficiently to recommend her to Viall, who instantly diagnosed her malady and sent her to me.

A thought, a yearning, a loss, was her disease. And the case was urgent. With her, so Viall said, it was a question of cure, or self-effacement.

For nearly an hour I talked to, but not with, my raven visitor, while she kept her dark gaze fixed upon me. After a time it was natural to hope that the studied restfulness of my room, its even gray tones, its purposely few and placid pictures, its fairly anaesthetic chairs — not to think of my conversation — had drugged her into a drowsy pliancy. I needed to set her at ease, to break down her defences, to crowd her aside, in order to see her inward demon face to face.

She sat there silent and immovable as before. Nothing, it appeared could loose the grip of this inner ghost that held her locked in its embrace. So at least her great hollow eyes tried to say.

I set my teeth and grew bold, and even jocose in my hardihood. She made me shiver.

"Miss Chalmer," I said, "you have let me do the talking. Now tell me something; tell me anything — it matters little what. Tell me the most amusing thing you remember. Or let your tongue run freely and say outright whatever occurs to you, no matter how silly you think it." I almost said, "No matter how sinful you think it," for these stubborn hysterias are always a forbidden thought seeking escape past a relent-

less refusal. But her resistance was stout enough already, and I caught myself in time.

Usually we early succeed in setting a patient to aimless, rambling speech. We encourage him to say what he likes, to pour out the idlest fancy in his mind. Not all of these fancies will be innocent. By his very avoidance of the searing idea the sufferer will confess it. Sooner or later he is bound to give himself away. A slip of the tongue, a stutter, a hesitation in the answer to a question, will tell us all, or give us our clue.

To the end my caller refused me this. For a moment I thought her eyes brightened with a great wish, but she never opened her lips. Not even a cryptic "Nevermore" quoth my raven.

"Miss Chalmer," I stuck to it, "you do have a very real disturbance — a trouble that makes you fear for your daily bread. By all means let me help you. I beg of you! Your doctor friends, I suppose, told you there was nothing wrong, didn't they? You only imagined, they said, there was something amiss with your throat and your arm. Am I right?"

Her head nodded "Yes." It was, one would say, the first word she had uttered.

"They were wrong, Miss Eleanora. You do not imagine your ills. They are real. There is something distinctly wrong with your throat and arm. Only, the seat of the trouble is not in those places themselves. The trouble comes of some occurrence in your life, some shock, perhaps, which you may have forgotten entirely. That is, you think you have forgotten it; but it is there, grinding away, deep down in your mind."

A swift start, a quick catch in her breath, set me hastening to add,

"It may have been some mere accident. A trifle. But whatever it is, let us find it. For as soon as we do, as soon as we reach down and lift it up for you to see how harmless it is, your trouble will leave you. Can't you recall some such — such 'accident'?"

She answered me with her steady gaze, but this time softened with a smile. That smile marked the uttermost ad-

vance I was to make that night in my caller's confidence. It mocked and accused me. It poured scorn over my simple arts. "How little you know what you ask!" it said.

I would have stayed her, but she rose to go. Silently she put on her coat in the hall, and laid her hand on the knob.

"Let me call a cab! . . . But you will go home! And sleep!"

She answered with her nod, and before I could say or do more she was gone.

With many misgivings I returned to my fire. Never before, and never since, have I looked into a gaze that seemed to come from such an incredible distance. Her eyes haunted me. They left me uneasy and ashamed. What terrible thing could it be, I wondered, that I had so lightly asked her to witness against herself?

It would profit no one if I traced the tiny, inching steps that brought me at last into Eleanora's confidence. Since, from the first, she would not talk, the thing to do was, somehow, to catch her unawares. So far as I could I began at once to conceal the fact of my watching her. At my own direction she came to me seldom, to avoid the appearance of her being under treatment. It would never avail with one so shy and so plagued as she. Instead I tried to give our relations the character of a simple, everyday acquaintance. And so she consented to long walks, we two together.

And so it began.

I remember those Spring mornings in the Park, when the world at work left it to ourselves. How like was her voice, when at last I really heard it, to one other, of an older memory, which she has effaced. Never since have I enjoyed a play as when I heard beside me the mellow music of her laughter, or smiled to see her try to conceal a furtive tear. Never shall I forget that moonlit night on one of our walks, when she burst forth, on the ferry, and recited, to the end of it, Whitman's poem. No good thing I have ever managed to accomplish will sit more comfortably in remembrance than this reblossoming that came to her cheeks, like a Springtime of the mind, this

new sparkle that gathered in her eyes like an April sunrise, in the new world I found I was giving her. She had come to me the raven; but here was the lost Lenore, recaptured and returning!

And she was my Lenore.

I too returned. The analyst in me vanished, and the man reappeared.

We lived under clearing skies, Eleanora and I. If still there was a topic—the only one—we dared not touch, it rather lent the last true stroke to my Lenore, something of an unspoken, an unspeakable appeal. It made every touch of her hand the touch of a sprite from another sphere. The lost Lenore had returned, but only as a lovely vision. A hundred times during the most wonderful Springtime I ever remember I burned to speak out to her; but the cruel demon in her heart, though he might be hiding, was there, I knew, ready to pounce again, at the first words of my claim. Eleanora was a slave to her memory, and I was lost to a spectral love.

One night it mastered me completely, this thing that was always on the tip of my tongue. We were out in my car, above town, in the hills. It was near the end of April. A balmy air fanned our cheeks. A shy new moon, like a silver boat, rode the pink billows of a sunset sky. A mist lay over the orchards and fields. Of a sudden we soared up a sharp incline in the shadowy road, and as if the weary car itself were awed and commanded me, I threw on the brake and brought us to rest on the peak. Below and all about us lay a fairy world of grove and meadow, feathered over with tufty trees, twinkling with distant lights, all mystery in the soft haze, as if the scene were too lovely to be real. It was her very realm.

For a long while neither of us spoke. But then I mustered courage.

“Well, little visitor from another world, doesn’t this look like home to you?”

Over her face in answer came the familiar smile, like the clearing of a cloudy day, but for still a while she refused to speak. Then in her far-away voice she said,

“Doesn’t it make you want to die here!”

"No!" I laughed. "It makes me want to live here. In the proper company!"

"It would"—she hesitated, "have to be the right sort, wouldn't it!"

Her dark eyes were busily sweeping the view as I looked into them. Plainly enough they were full of a thought that was not of me.

Great heavens, there she was, with my own enthusiasms, interests, likings! All that I yearned for, she was. Certainly I was willing to take my chances with this dreadful something she could not, would not tell.

"I know that you mean," I began.

"I mean the 'proper company' would have to be somebody you owed greatly," she broke in on me. "Somebody you'd be more than merely married to. Somebody you'd be devoted to—oh—enormously. Who'd oblige you to be better than you know. . . . If that could happen, I could live here. Otherwise—"

"Otherwise, you mean, one would hardly measure up to the scenery!" I laughed. Those were the words I spoke: "Somebody!" was the one I thought.

"But—doesn't it make *you* feel that way?"

And I wondered which of my thoughts she had answered.

Great God! Hadn't this new possession of her made up for the loss that had gnawed at me for so long? Could she be shyly confessing that her case was the same? I turned to demand the answer—and saw that she was shivering.

"It's—it's a bit chilly," she hastened to explain.

"Oh, isn't it!" I bitterly assented, so that she punished me with a sad glance of understanding and reproach. And I was not her "right sort," I fear, as we drove on.

Still, it came over me, we had edged that close to each other. It was the nearest yet. And I noticed, with the passing days, that she consented to live on. Not that; she bubbled. A dark lustrous beauty, that I recognized as always rightfully hers, came back, along with her health. And the sly and slightly acid wit that came with it, the shy gayety, the fine and fragrant charm—these were not things new; they were like old and buried friends, resurrected. As also was I!

And then it happened. The demon too came back to life.

One afternoon, as we sauntered about town, such comrades now, Eleanora fell limply to the walk. It was in May. Three months before, when she was a total stranger, the quiverings of her body, her gasps for breath, had shaken even professional me. Now they stopped my heart.

What a place it was for Eleanora! A crowd collected. The police appeared. An ambulance clanged to the spot. Yet she quickly revived, and with a physician's authority I was able to assure the wardens of the law, and I saw her to her home myself. Before leaving the scene of her relapse I took only the precaution of making a careful note of the surroundings. They contained, I was sure, the clue to the tragedy in her life we had, with such happy artifice, almost waved away. And of a sudden I had a tutored guess at the clue.

Not far away was a public building of wide and mournful fame — The Tombs.

That I had guessed a way to her secret, Eleanora knew for herself, and for a long time she utterly refused to see me, at my office or at her lodging. In the end she was driven back upon my help. Her painful affliction had returned, worse than before. For two weeks she battled with her resistances, and then she called. Then it was she told me all. And it was I, then, who was tortured, as I watched the soft lips fashioning her strange confession.

Of course she was only twenty when it happened. And does any one know the meaning of love at that age? I doubt it. But the young man of her fancy had run away and married another, a little more subject to his whim, I should say.

Even yet I can see Eleanora as she looked that night, with my study lamp idiotically beaming upon her troubled beauty as she leaned across the table, now eager to tell me what I was so far from eager to hear.

“Oh, I was petted and spoiled and wilful and — and romantic!” she laughed out the accusation.

“But you were twenty!” I hastened to excuse her. And so we pieced it together, I helping where she halted.

“I see,” said I, “the scorned beauty undertook to be mortally wounded.”

"Oh, of course. And I took to hating men. I loathed them all. The stupid brutes!"

"And you settled down to be an old maid forever."

"Oh, did I! And more yet. I ran away. I wouldn't be a burden on my guardians—on anybody—any more. So I came to the city, to live by myself."

"Ah, yes. You were going to show them!"

And so, for a while, we made a merry jest of her trouble—and of my torture.

"But I did show them!"

"I know. Employers like the girl who hates men!"

"My first one was a big lawyer. What a worker he was! And what a pleasure it was to work with him. He appreciated my liking for duty and responsibility."

"I fancy he was quick to see the merits of a secretary not called to the telephone every hour to make dates for dinners and cabarets."

"He trusted me! And how he did help me along. In no time I was his confidential clerk."

"And all the while you got a grim satisfaction out of seeing base, vile men in the toils of the law and getting their just deserts."

Her head drooped at that. "I'm afraid I did," she laughed weakly. "Oh, I know I did! The lawyer himself used to laugh at it. Used to encourage me in it. It was that—" She looked up, her face now troubled afresh. "It was that," she brought out slowly, "that made all the mischief. Because, you see, the—the famous case came along." She closed her eyes and shuddered. "I worked on it with him. Night and day we worked, putting the case together, Mr. Grierson and I—"

"*Grierson?* The District Attorney?"

I leaped to my feet, and so startled her that she rose with me, in alarm.

"Yes," she said, wonderingly, "Grierson was his name. Do you know him? The District Attorney. We almost sent the poor fellow to the electric chair, Mr. Grierson and I. Or no—" she faltered. "I can't blame it on Mr. Grierson. It was I."

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I cried to her: "Stop!"

With a step I had only the table between us and my hands firmly pinning hers down to it. "You poor child!" it choked me to say. "Was it you? Were you the prim little, grim little witness? Who almost sent that boy to the electric chair? . . . Don't go on!"

"Oh, but I must, I must! And you must listen!" She understood now, that it was to her good to tell — when I wished only to spare her!

"I'll listen, if I must, Eleanora. But I can guess it all. It's come over me in a flash. Shall we —" I'm afraid my voice was a bit unsteady. "Shall we save him — you and I?"

For a long moment we searched each other's eyes. She understood me, all along she had understood me, I'm convinced of it now. She knew what it cost me to say what I did, and her eyes widened beautifully, in applause of it. I remember their gaze, and always I shall remember it. But never have I heard a voice, neither Melba's nor Duse's, that moved me more than hers when she decided for the other man, and said,

"O-oh, will you?"

"Come! Sit down, my dear. We'll soon have you at peace with that little conscience of yours. I see it all. Let's reconstruct it."

I whisked up chairs for us, and we sat down on either side of the table, with our arms spread across it, still searching each other with our eyes.

"Pardy is his name, isn't it? Correct me where I'm wrong. But he was book-keeper in a bank, and accused of shooting the girl whose body had been found. He'd broken with the girl, once before, in a lover's quarrel — am I right? And he'd later grown jealous of her favors to another man. That was the motive your man Grierson charged against him — that and a chain of circumstantial evidence. Wasn't it?"

She nodded "Yes."

"Ah, yes. And your friend Grierson was making the most of it — possibly to keep up his reputation. But what a bad job he made of the case! The girl's body had been found in a vacant lot, with a bullet-hole in the back of the head. Alto-

gether it was a commonplace, a conventional killing. Yet if your man Grierson had had my peculiar experience, he would have seen that the strongest evidence against Pardy, such as it was, lay in just that commonplace quality of the deed. For genuine ingenuity, for the cleverness that baffles completely, for real genius in killing, we've got to go to the insane. But no; Grierson knew his way about. And he made you his victim, the scoundrel! Nothing would do but he must have experts in gunnery, specialists in blood analysis, and last of all the dictagraph, — and you."

"O-oh, don't!" Eleanora thought to stay me.

"Fine dramatic flourish, it was, hingeing the case on the introduction of that dictagraph evidence of yours at the last moment — the evidence he forced you to take against Pardy while he lay in The Tombs. Ah, yes; I remember it made a thumping sensation." I laid a hand upon one of hers. "And look what it's cost you!"

"Go on; I can stand it. I must!" she murmured.

"Of course you can stand it! It's nothing against you!"

"You mean that?" she pleaded, fiercely.

"Why, don't you remember Wells — my colleague Wells — the witness against your fine dictagraph? He punctured Grierson in every line. What a grand time Grierson did have with him — added a new facet to his fame as a cross-examiner, with his exquisite irony in grilling Wells! Wait! I've got it all here in my scrapbook."

In a moment I was reading to a brightening girl, an Eleanora who began to live again.

"Doesn't it all come back to you! Now, listen:

Q. "You are a scientist, I believe, Dr. Wells?"

A. "By reputation I am scientist, Sir."

Q. "By reputation, yes. And we are to understand that as a scientist you are against the use of this instrument of science?"

A. "As a means of deciding the fate of a man on trial —"

Q. "One moment! That's to say, you are against the use of the dictagraph in a court of law?"

A. "You may put it that way."

Q. "I thank you, Dr. Wells. You are against this sci-"

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tific, this scientifically impersonal instrument, I'm to understand, because of the — the *human* element that enters into it!"

A. "I have already testified to that effect."

Q. "So I believe. You understand the principle of the dictagraph, I take it, Dr. Wells?"

A. "I do."

Q. "Unlike yourself, Dr. Wells, I am not a scientist. Correct me if I err. But as I understand the dictagraph, it is a transmitter and a receiver; a telephone system in itself, without an interfering central exchange. Am I right?"

A. "Partly right. It will suit your purpose nicely."

Q. "I thank you, Dr. Wells. Will you tell me if I have been wrong?"

A. "A telephone transmitter will transmit only the sounds addressed to it directly."

Q. "And the dictagraph — ?"

A. "Is designed to magnify sound, to catch and transmit sounds originating perhaps at a distance from its transmitter. It has long been known as a microphone."

Q. "I stand corrected. I thank you, Dr. Wells. Science is a truly wonderful thing. Still, in my crude conception of the instrument which lies here before us, I am to assume that the person who talks and the person who listens are separated only by the copper wire transmitting the waves of sound?"

A. "If you please."

Q. "Ah. And this wire will admit only that which enters the transmitter?"

A. "That is all, I believe."

Q. "No astral waves, no aerial disturbance, no — no 'inductions' of any sort? Do I use the proper term?"

A. "It is quite likely."

Q. "No outside interference, then, of any sort — even human interference?"

A. "It may be so."

Q. (With theatrical effect). "Then where, Dr. Wells, does the *human* element enter in the use of the dictagraph?"

A. "In the person who takes down the testimony."

Q. "Indeed!" (Laughter in the Court). "Then you question the integrity of a trusted confidential clerk, whose character has been attested before this court of law?"

A. "Not necessarily her conscious integrity."

Q. "Oh, indeed! You question, then, her — her *unconscious* integrity!" (Loud laughter).

A. "Precisely that."

Q. "Is it possible! Then, with both her ears closed to all sounds but those of the dictagraph, the listener would be apt to hear her grandmother warn her against too light underwear! Or she would be hearing unearthly voices! Or a luncheon of lobster might cloud her auditory faculties! In the conscientious discharge of a solemn duty, a duty whose importance she fully recognized, her mind would be apt to wander?" . . .

"Ah, yes, Eleanora," I broke it off; "Grierson was a huge success, wasn't he! But I know, and you know, don't you, that Wells was right. You may not have known it at the time. It was the first use of the instrument in a court of law. Public curiosity was all excited. Grierson was determined that it should work, and he caught you up in his determination. Didn't he?"

"Yes," she said.

"But now you know, don't you? as well as I know, that the dictagraph is no such magical instrument as most people imagine it is. I've got one here: shall we test it, and prove it?"

"Oh, don't! Oh, no!"

"Most people imagine that in some magical manner it selects the human voice out of every other sound in the room where it's placed. It does no such intelligent work, does it?"

She shook a drooping head.

"In magnifying all sounds, it sweeps up every possible noise within its reach. Didn't you find it so? Tell me, Eleanora. I'm asking it to relieve you."

"Yes," she said.

"When Grierson set you to listening to Pardy and his visitors, didn't you hear the very ticking of their watches, their breathings, the scraping of their feet, and all the murmur and hum of a place like The Tombs? I know you did. And where

all these other sounds were magnified, along with the voices, the voices themselves were not always distinct!"

She merely looked acquiescence now, confident that I was unwinding the hideous toils about her.

"Well, then, you see that Wells was right. The human element does enter, in the person of the listener. Even where the listener is most innocent, most scrupulously precise, if there comes a moment of indistinctness, when other sounds blur the voice, then the inner mentality of the listener steps in to interfere. His impulse will be to help out, to interpret where he has not definitely heard. Precisely as Wells would have testified, if Grierson had dared to let him. Didn't you find it so?"

Eleanora laid a grateful hand upon mine. "Oh, thank you, thank you!" she cried, in her deep tones. "Yes! I found it so. Not then, but afterward! Afterward!"

"That part too I can guess, my dear. But at the time Grierson set you to work, there you sat, with your innocent foolish little school-girl revenges, your youthful pride in your importance, your fancied contempt of men—above all, with Grierson's determination driving you. Isn't it all so?"

"Yes, yes!"

"At the time, you were positive enough as to what you 'heard' with your conscious mind. What you didn't know then, but soon came to suspect, was just that interference on the part of your inner self, that spoke instead whenever the voice on the wire became indistinct."

"I see it!"

"At the time, you could testify as you did with a light enough heart. All the same, dear, didn't it give you a start—(forgive me!)—when you heard the sentence?"

If I may say so, Eleanora uttered a soundless scream. I patted her hand, and in a moment she had recovered. "Oh, I am so thankful I got Mr. Grierson to have it commuted! I did that much, at least!"

"And that was the moment *your* sentence began! Wasn't it, dear? You—you came to have misgivings."

"Oh, didn't I! It was no time at all, when I couldn't sleep. I couldn't eat. Mr. Grierson sent me away for a rest,

but the very day I returned the first signs of these chokings appeared, and the thing that was wrong with my arm and my hearing. I suspected why it was. Ear, arm, voice—I had used them all against that poor boy. It seemed like a punishment I had deserved."

"I know. That mistrust of yourself soon became a fear, and the fear became a wild dread, a morbid self-reproach."

"Nothing would stop it! I left Mr. Grierson, to get away from courts and cases. But I couldn't forget. How could I! At last everything came to remind me. If I so much as thought of a court or a prison I began to stifle. The very words of court and prison in a newspaper would bring on the wicked thing. If I saw a jail, or a policeman in the street, it would set me off." . . .

Still there ring in my ears, whenever I think of them, the words she cried to me at the end of her self-accusation:

"I've felt like a murderer, Doctor Carver! All this while! Can we ever set it right?"

Lenore is once more at peace with herself. She is freed of her ills, except for a recollection that at times must give her to wince. It was easy to show her that in a manner we are all "murderers" of each other. Always we are stabbing even good friends with the sharp word or the selfish deed. So, in the end, I exorcised the inward demon, the ghost that walked with Lenore. Merely to have shown to her how natural was her childish fault, if even it was that, lifted the poisonous pall from mind.

So, here I sit, alone again. It is not the Autumn fire that obliges me to shade my eyes, but a remembered vision. I knew how it would end. It cost us a fight, but we got him free, and what I knew would happen came to pass. When a woman pities a man, and grieves for him, and tortures herself with remorse for a fancied injustice toward him, there's no mistaking what is to follow.

In our wise time there's no such thing as age, but only differences in age. A man of forty-nine is still a youth, with all his faculties alert and his memory acute. Still, I've noticed,

there's one thing a man of forty-nine invariably forgets — that he is forty-nine.

Besides, I have to own it, Pardy is a wonderful fellow. They have their little place now, above town, in the hills. And think what must be their devotion! Think what she owes him and gives him, and what he must owe in return for it!

There's always a place for me beside their hearth. And I love to see them. And yet — the face I see in my fire, a flicker of the memory, is the sweeter to me, in being all my own.





# THE STRATFORD JOURNAL

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EDITORS

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# Because of Monotony

BY MAXIM GORKI

TRANSLATED BY IRVING ORMOND

## I

PUFFING voluminous volleys of thick gray smoke, the passenger-train, like an enormous reptile, disappeared in the distance of the steppe, engulfed in the yellow sea of growing corn. The rumbling of the train seemed to merge with the smoke in the hot atmosphere, and for several moments interrupted the indifferent silence of the vast, deserted plain, in the midst of which the little railroad station, because of its isolation, aroused an impression of sadness.

And when the muffled, but insistent noise of the train had grown fainter and died away under the clear dome of the cloudless sky, silence once more resumed its oppressive reign, adding to the desolate monotony of the steppe.

The steppe looked now a golden yellow; the vault of the heavens was a luminous blue; two colors of incommensurable vastness. The dark walls of the station planted in their midst produced the effect of an accidental stroke of the brush, which marred the centre of that melancholy picture, patiently painted by some artist devoid of imagination and inspiration.

Every day, at noon and at four o'clock in the afternoon there arrived at the station, on their way across the steppe, trains that stopped for four minutes. These precious minutes provided the only distraction at the station: they brought impressions to the station employees.

Each train has a multitude of distinct persons, dressed in various manners. They appear for a moment; behind the little windows of the coaches they pass rapidly by, with weary face, impatient, indifferent; the signal is given, the whistle blows, and with a nerve-wracking noise they fly off across the steppe, far away, toward the city, where men and women throng in throbbing life.

To the station employees, who are sorely bored in their solitude, it is most interesting to behold these faces; after the departure of the train they exchange impressions that have been hastily gathered. About them extends the silent steppe, above them floats the indifferent sky, and within their hearts they harbor obscure envy toward the men who every day ride by, speeding on to some unknown place, while they remain there, prisoners of the desert, as if living apart from life and in the impossibility of seeing any human countenance, except during the two hundred and forty seconds each day.

And after the train has gone they remain rooted to the platform, their eyes following the black thread that disappears in the golden sea of the prairies, silent before the manifestation of life flying past them.

They are almost all there: the chief, a corpulent red-faced personage with the mustache of a Cossack; his aide, a young fellow with reddish hair and a pointed little beard; the watchman Luka, short, inquisitive and wily, and one of the switchmen, Gomozov, a taciturn peasant, robust, with black hair, serious and full face.

Near the door of the station, seated on a bench, is the chief's wife, a fat little woman who suffers much from the heat; in her lap slumbers an infant with cheeks as bulging and as red as his mother's.

The locomotive and the coaches disappear behind a slope, as if the train had been swallowed by the earth.

Then the chief turns to his wife and says:

"Well Sofia! Is the samovar ready?"

"It certainly is," she replies sweetly, with a languid voice.

"Luka! Hey there! Sweep the road. Can't you see they've filled it with all kinds of filth?"

"Yes, I know, Matvei Yegorovitch."

"Very well. Shall we have tea, Nikolai Petrovitch?"

"So as not to break the custom," replies the aide.

And when the four o'clock train has left, Matvei Yegorovitch says to his wife:

"Well Sofia! Is dinner ready?"

Then he gives the order to Luka, — always the same order, and invites his aide who dines with them.

“Good. . . . Shall we eat?”

And his aide replies, properly:

“As always.”

They walk from the platform to the dining-room, where there are many flowers and few pieces of furniture, — where the odor of the kitchen is perceptible, as well as that of the infant’s swaddling-clothes, and there, seated around the table, they speak of what speeds by the station.

“Did you notice, Nikolai Petrovitch, a brunette dressed in yellow who was in one of the second-class coaches? There was a stunning beauty for you!”

“Not at all bad, but dressed without taste,” answered the aide.

He always spoke in a curt, sententious manner, for he believed himself to be an educated man, conversant with life. He had been to college. In a little note-book bound in black cloth he was wont to inscribe sayings of famous men, phrases culled from the feuilletons of newspapers and from the books that came by accident into his hands. The chief never contradicted him; in all matters that did not concern the service he listened attentively to his adjutant. The wise aphorisms from Nikolai Petrovitch’s note-book pleased him especially, and he was frank in his admiration of them. The aide’s “but” in regard to the brunette evoked a query from Matvei Yegorovitch.

“Then you don’t think that yellow becomes brunettes?”

“I refer to her manner, not the color,” explained Nikolai Petrovitch, carefully taking some preserves which he brought forth from a crystal jar to place in the dessert plate.

“Manner is a thing by itself,” admitted the chief.

His wife joined in the discussion, for such a subject was within her scope and of direct concern to her.

But since the minds of such persons are very little exercised the conversation proceeds slowly, rarely penetrating to their feelings.

And through the window the silent steppe gazes in upon them, and the sky, majestic in its proud serenity.

At every moment freight trains arrive, but the personnel of these trains has been known to them for a long time. They are all half-asleep fellows, oppressed by the monotony of the journeys across the steppe. Of course sometimes they relate an accident that occurred on the line. But news of this character arouses no reflection: it is devoured just as epicures swallow a rare and savory dish.

And the sun slowly descends in the heavens, until it reaches the edge of the steppe, and when it has almost touched the earth it turns purple. A red tint covers the plain, which awakes an apprehensive mood of insufficiency, a vague aspiration towards something far away, beyond that emptiness. The rim of the sun then touches the earth. For a long time after its disappearance there sounds in the sky the music of the sunset's resplendent colors, and twilight arrives, warm and silent. The stars light up and tremble in the heavens, as if terrified by the monotony that reigns on earth.

With the coming of twilight the steppe grows smaller; the darknesses of dusk arise from all directions and make for the station, and night falls, black and lugubrious.

The station lamps are lighted; brighter and higher than the others is the light of the signal-desk. Around it, darkness and silence.

At each instant there is the sound of a bell: a signal that a train is approaching; the funeral tolling of the bell crosses the steppe, where it is quickly extinguished.

A short while after the ringing, a vivid light draws nearer, and the silence of the steppe trembles with the muffled noise of the train, which rolls toward the solitary station, surrounded by darkness.

## II

The lower stratum of the society of the station maintains a life somewhat distinct from that of the aristocracy. The watchman Luka struggles perpetually with his desire to run off to his wife and his brother, who live in the town, seven versts away. That's where his home is, as he says to Gomozov when he orders the taciturn, leisurely switchman to lend a helping hand in the station.

At the word "home" Gomozov always sighs heavily and says to Luka:

"Yes, you're right. . . . One's home requires care. . . .

And the other switchman, Afanassi Yagodka, an old soldier with a round, ruddy face encircled by gray hairs, and of jesting, malicious propensities, refuses to believe Luka.

"Home!" he exclaims mockingly. "His wife! I know very well what that means. . . . Is your wife a widow? Or perhaps some soldier's spouse?"

"Shut up, you king of the fowl!" retorts Luka, scornfully.

He dubs Yagodka king of the fowl because the old soldier professes a deep affection for birds. His entire house is covered, inside as well as outside, with cages and dove-cotes; within and without, all day long is heard the ceaseless trilling and cooing of the birds. Imprisoned by the soldier the quails sing their monotonous "pay your debts," the starlings murmur long discourses, many-colored birds whisper tirelessly, whistle or trill, enlivening the soldier's sombre existence. Taking care of them during the time left free to him by his work, he treats them with the utmost tenderness and solicitude, not interesting himself at all in his companions.

Luka he calls a snake,—Gomozov a katsap,\* and openly terms them "women chasers," saying that they should be whipped for it.

Luka gives little heed to his words; but if the soldier succeeds in rousing his anger, for a long time he grumbles in most offensive manner.

"Gray barracks beast! Garrison rat! What can you understand? You spent your whole life chasing the frogs behind the cannons. Who's telling you to say anything? Back to your partridges,—command them, order your fowl about!"

Yagodka, after having heard the watchman's insults, calmly went to lodge complaint with the chief, who shouted that he didn't want people coming to him and pestering him with nonsense, and dismissed the soldier unceremoniously. Whereupon the soldier betook himself to Luka and in his turn insulted him

\* Name given by inhabitants of Great Russia to those of Little Russia.

without getting excited about it, calmly, with execrable words full of meaning, until Luka dashed off, leaving him alone.

"What can you do? There's no getting along with that fellow! No doubt it's all silly; just the same, 'Judge not that ye be not judged. . . .'"

On a certain occasion the soldier answered him with a loud guffaw.

"Poll-parrot! 'Judge not, judge not. . . .' why, if people didn't judge one another they'd have nothing to talk about."

Besides the chief's wife there was another woman in the station,—the cook. Her name was Arina; she was almost forty, and very ugly: obese, with hanging breasts, always dirty and ragged. She waddled like a duck, and in her freckled face beamed two little darting eyes surrounded by a network of wrinkles. There was something submissive, oppressed, about her ill-formed person, and her fleshy lips curled out constantly, as if she wanted to implore pardon of all men, throw herself at their feet, yet not daring to cry. Gomozov spent eight months in the station without paying any special heed to the cook; whenever he met her he would simply wish her "good day!" She would reply in like manner, they would exchange two or three sentences and would continue on their way. But one day Gomozov came to the chief's kitchen to ask Arina to mend a few of his shirts. The cook consented, and after they were mended, for some reason or other, she brought them to Gomozov in person.

"Ah! A thousand thanks!" he said. "Three shirts at ten kopeks apiece makes thirty kopeks I owe you,—correct?"

"Correct," replied Arina.

Gomozov sank into a reverie and was silent for some time.

"What district do you come from?" he finally asked the woman, who, while he was mediating had scrutinized his beard.

"From Riazan," she answered.

"That's very far! And how do you come here?"

"Why, to tell the truth, . . . I'm alone . . . all alone—"

"That can carry one farther still," sighed Gomozov.

There followed a long silence.

"What a coincidence! I, too, am alone. I come from the

district of Sergatch," Gomozov began to say. "I, too am alone . . . all alone. I once had a wife. . . . a child, two children. . . . My wife died during an epidemic of cholera, and the children. . . . from something or other, perhaps because their last hour had come. . . . died, too. And I, . . . how shall I say? I was left without a compass to guide me. . . . Misfortune. . . . Yes, after that I tried without success to establish myself once more. But the machine had fallen apart; it no longer worked and I began to go, as one would say, out of my path. . . . And here it is three years that I've dragged along in my wretchedness."

"It's bad not to have a husband!" murmured Arina sweetly.

"I should think so. You are a widow, perhaps?"

"Unmarried."

"You don't say!" exclaimed Gomozov incredulously.

"Upon my word!" affirmed Arina.

"How is it you never married?"

"Who was going to take me? I've nothing . . . . how could I tempt anyone? If I'd have been good-looking at least!"

"Yes," slowly uttered Gomozov, who had remained meditating.

And stroking his beard he began to examine her with penetrating glance. . . . Then he inquired what wages she received.

"Two fifty."

"Good. There are thirty kopeks coming to you! Listen to what I say to you. Come for them tonight. . . . around ten o'clock. What do you say? I'll give them to you then, we'll have tea, and we'll dance to drive away the monotony. . . . We're both so lonesome. . . . Come, won't you?"

"I'll come," she promised, impatiently.

And she left.

Later, having returned to the house punctually at ten o'clock, she departed from Gomozov at dawn.

He did not repeat his invitation, nor did he give her the thirty kopeks.

Arina came again of her own accord, meek and submissive, and silently planted herself before him. He, stretched out upon the bed, gazed at her and rolling toward the wall, said, "Sit down."

When she had sat down he admonished her:

"Hear what I tell you. . . . Keep this secret. Let nobody know! . . . Understand! Otherwise things would be very unpleasant. . . . I'm no youngster, nor are you, either. . . . Understand?"

She nodded affirmatively.

When they parted he gave her some clothes that needed mending and warned her again:

"Nobody! Not a soul!"

And thus they lived, hiding their relations from everybody.

Arina came to his house in spite of all, almost dragging herself. He received her with great condescension, affecting lordly airs, and at times he would say to her, frankly:

"How ugly you are!"

She would smile in silence, — an insipid, guilty smile, and when she left him she would take along something to repair.

They did not meet often. But on various occasions, encountering her at the station, he would say to her in a low voice:

"Come tonight."

And Arina would go meekly, with a serious expression on her freckled face, as if she were intent upon fulfilling an important duty.

And when she returned to the station her countenance would wear its habitual lugubrious expression of guilt and fright.

At times she would stop at some nook sheltered by a tree of the steppe. Here reigned night, and in the austere silence her heart would compress with fear.

### III

On a certain occasion, after having seen the four o'clock train leave, the higher employees of the station organized a tea-party in the garden, before the windows of Matvei Yegorovitch's rooms, in the leafy shade of the poplars.

It was a hot-weather custom that introduced a touch of variety into the monotony of their existence.

They would sip tea and look at each other in silence after having exhausted all the subjects suggested by the train.

"It's even hotter today than yesterday," commented Matvei Yegorovitch, handing his wife the jar and with the other hand wiping the perspiration that bedewed his forehead.

The woman took the jar and observed:

"It simply seems hotter because of the monotony."

"H'm! . . . . Perhaps. . . . Really. . . . How tedious existence is! Now cards, for example, are good in cases like this. . . . But we are only three. . . ."

Nikolai Petrovitch shrugged his shoulders, blinked, and announced, in a clear voice:

"Cards, according to Schopenhauer, are the bankruptcy of intellect."

"Well expressed!" enthused Matvei Yegorovitch. "Very well. 'The bankruptcy of intellect' . . . . Yes. And who said that?"

"Schopenhauer, a German philosopher. . . ."

"A philosopher! So-o!"

"And tell me. These philosophers. . . . Are they, maybe, employees of the Universities?" asked Sofia Ivanovna.

"It is. . . . how shall I explain it? . . . . it's not a position but. . . . so to say, a natural gift. . . . Everybody can be a philosopher. . . . Everyone who's born with the habit of thinking about the beginning and the end of things. Of course, there are philosophers in the universities, but you can be one anywhere at all. . . . even if you happen to be an employee at a railroad station."

"And do those in the universities see very much?"

"That depends on their. . . . intelligence."

"But if there were only one more we could have started a fine game!" sighed Matvei Yegorovitch.

And the conversation languished.

The larks sing in the blue heavens, the linnets fit from branch to branch of the poplars, chirping sweetly. Inside a child is crying.

"Is Arina there?" asked Matvei Yegorovitch.

"Certainly," replied his wife in a low voice.

"A queer creature," observed Nikolai Petrovitch.

"Eccentricity is the first manifestation of triviality," re-

marked Nikolai Petrovitch sententiously, with a dreamy, meditative air.

“How’s that?” asked the chief, interested.

And Nikolai Petrovitch, repeating the aphorism with a professorial air, rolls his eyes in a voluptuous manner, while Sofia Ivanovna says, in a languid little voice:

“How well you remember what you’ve read! And here I can’t recall what I read yesterday!”

“Habit,” replied Nikolai Petrovitch curtly.

“No, that other fellow is better. What do you call him? Schopenhauer?” said Matvei Yegorovitch with a smile. “So that whatever is young will become old.”

“And vice versa, for a poet has written: ‘All that is new comes from what has been left by the old.’”

“The devil! How can you remember all that? It gushes from you like water from a fountain!”

Matvei Yegorovitch laughed contentedly; his wife smiled with a kindly air, and Nikolai Petrovitch tried in vain to hide his pleasure at the compliment.

“And who said that about triviality?”

“Bariatinsky, a poet.”

“And that other quotation?”

“Fofanov, another poet.”

“There’s a couple of smart fellows for you!” enthused Matvei Yegorovitch.

“And with a musical voice, laughing with contentment, he repeated the two citations.

It seems that monotony plays with them. For a moment it frees them from its clutches, then once more grasps them in its power. Then they become silent, suffering from the heat, which is increased by the tea.

In the station, only silence; on the steppe, only the sun.

“Oh, yes! I was about to speak of Arina!” recalls Matvei Yegorovitch. “There’s a strange woman for you! I watch her with wonder. As if she were crushed by something. She doesn’t laugh, or sing, and speaks very little. . . . You’d think she was a piece of wood! And yet she’s a wonderful worker, and she’s so careful with Lelia, so devoted to the child. . . .”

He speaks in a low voice, but wishes nevertheless that Arina will hear him through the window. He knows that servants swell with pride upon hearing themselves praised. His wife interrupts him with a meaningful rebuke.

“None of that. You don’t know much about her.”

Whereupon Nikolai Petrovitch, beating time with a spoon on the table, began to murmur sweetly, as if declaiming:

A slave am I of love,  
And deep is my despair,  
When in the lists I enter,  
'Gainst you, my demon fair!

He smiled.

“How now? What’s that you’re saying? She. . . . Ah, you’ve got something between you!”

And Matvei Yegorovitch laughed heartily. His cheeks shook and beads of perspiration rolled down his forehead.

“There’s nothing so wonderful about her,” said his wife. “In the first place, she doesn’t take good care of the child. In the second, have you noticed the kind of bread she makes? Bitter, burned. And why?”

“Yes, indeed. There is something the matter with the bread. . . . We’ll have to speak to her about it. But, the deuce! I didn’t expect anything like this! So she’s a regular heart-breaker! Devil take me! And who’s the man? Lukachka! I’ll tease the life out of the old devil! Yagodka! The toothless dandy!”

“Gomozov,” said Nikolai Petrovitch curtly.

“So grave a fellow as that! O-oh! But you’re. . . . You’re not fooling, are you?”

Such a shocking bit of gossip amused Matvei Yegorovitch immensely. He was soon laughing in loud outbursts, tears coming to his eyes; first he spoke of the necessity of giving the lovers a severe reprimand; then he began to imagine the tender conversations that passed between them, and exploded anew in a deafening roar.

At last he became petulant. Nikolai Petrovitch assumed a serious face, while Sofia Ivanovna brusquely interrupted her husband’s talk.

"The devil! I don't have to pay his debts, do I? This is interesting!" continued Matvei Yegorovitch, unable to control himself.

At this juncture Luka appeared, saying, not very correctly, "The telegraph is calling."

"I'm going. Give the signal to 42."

In another moment he was beside the aide at the station, where Luka replied to the telegraph call. Nikolai Petrovitch went to the apparatus and asked the next station, "Can I send train 42?"

The chief passed through the office, smiled and said, "We've got to play those devils a trick. Just to kill time and conquer this deadly monotony. . . . We may well be permitted to laugh for once."

"Certainly, that's permissible," agreed Nikolai Petrovitch, without leaving the apparatus.

For he knew that philosophy must be expressed in a laconic manner.

#### IV

The opportunity for indulging in a little laughter was not slow in presenting itself.

On a certain night Gomozov went to the shack where Arina, by his order and with permission of her master had arranged a bed amid all the old furniture. The place was exposed and damp, and the broken boxes, the casks, the tables and all the other objects assumed in the darkness the most terrifying shapes. When Arina was alone in the midst of all this she was so afraid that she could scarcely sleep, and she recited all the prayers she had ever learned, in a subdued voice.

Gomozov came, and for a long time silently took her to him, and after he had become tired he fell asleep. But he was soon awakened by the uneasy whispering of Arina.

"Timofei Petrovitch. Timofei Petrovitch!"

"What's the matter?" asked Gomozov, not yet thoroughly awake.

"We've been locked in!"

"What do you mean?" he exclaimed, sitting up with a start.

“Somebody came here and with some chains. . . .”

“Are you crazy?” he grumbled, angrily and in terror, thrusting her from him.

Gomozov arose, and stumbling against several objects made his way to the door, pushed it, and after a silence said, ill-humoredly, “The soldier!”

Someone on the other side of the door laughed gleefully.

“Open!” begged Gomozov aloud.

“What’s that?”

It was the soldier’s voice.

“I tell you to open!”

“Tomorrow morning,” replied the soldier.

And he went off.

“I’ve got to get to work!” cried Gomozov, in tones of mingled anger and entreaty.

“I’ll attend to your duties. Don’t worry.”

“You dog, you!” murmured the switchman, in anxiety. “Wait a while! You haven’t any right to lock me up. . . . He has the key. . . . What’ll you tell him? He’ll ask, ‘Where is Gomozov?’ And. . . . Ha!. . . . Answer him!”

“But, you must know that the order for this came from the chief himself,” said Arina in a low, despairing voice.

“The chief!” stammered Gomozov, horrified. “Why?”

And then, after a moment’s silence.

“You lie!” he exclaimed.

She replied with a deep sigh.

“What will this lead to?” wondered the switchman, sitting down upon something near the door. What a disgrace for me! And all on account of you, you ugly old witch!”

With his fists doubled up Gomozov made a threatening gesture toward the direction whence came the breathing. She, on her side, was careful not to say a word.

A dark dampness surrounded them, a darkness impregnated with the odor of limestone, mould, and something acrid that seemed to pierce the nostrils. Strips of moonlight came through the cracks of the door. Behind, a freight train leaving the station rumbled off noisily.

“What good is this silence?” asked Gomozov, in a rage.

"What am I to do now? First you commit follies and then you're silent! Think, devil take you! What are we to do? Where can I hide to conceal this shame? Oh, good Lord in heaven! Why did I ever fall in with such a . . . ?"

"I'll implore pardon," said Arina, in a low voice.

"And then?"

"Perhaps they'll forgive. . . ."

"What good will that do me? If they pardon you! Well, what then? On whom will the disgrace fall? It's me that they'll laugh at!"

After another pause he began to curse her anew. And the time passed with cruel slowness. At last the woman, in a trembling voice, said to him, entreatingly, "Timofei Petrovitch, forgive me!"

"You ought to be forgiven with a good rap on the head!" he snarled.

Again a long silence, lugubrious, unnerving, full of suffering and suppressed anger for the two persons imprisoned in the darkness.

"Good heavens! If only day would come more quickly!" wailed Arina in her perplexity.

"Shut up, or I'll knock daylight into you!" scowled Gomozov, returning to his bitter reproaches.

And once again the torture of silence fell over them. And the cruelty of time increased with the approach of day, as if each minute retarded its progress, maliciously enjoying the ludicrous, yet grievous situation of the two persons.

At last Gomozov fell asleep, but the song of a rooster, crowing near the cabin, awoke him.

"Hey there, witch! Are you sleeping?" he asked, in a muffled voice.

"No," answered Arina, with a deep sigh.

"Wouldn't you like a nice little nap?" proposed the switchman, ironically. "Come. . . ."

"Timofei Petrovitch!" implored Arina with a shrill cry. "Don't torment me! Have pity on me! In the name of Christ, son of God, have pity on me! I'm alone, all alone! And you, my beloved. . . ."

"None of your howling, and don't make yourself ridiculous," interjected Gomozov seriously, quieting the hysterical muttering of the woman, who had moved him somewhat. "Hush! When the Lord begins to punish. . . ."

And anew they waited in silence for the passing of each minute. But the moments went by without bringing anything. At last, through the cracks of the door could be seen the gleam of the sun's rays, which illuminated the darkness of the cabin. Somebody came to the door, listened for a moment and then went away.

"Hangman!" growled Gomozov.

And he spat out.

Another period of waiting, silent and tyrannical.

"Good Lord, I beg You!" murmured Arina.

It seemed that someone was slowly coming near. The chain rattled, and the voice of the chief was heard.

"Gomozov! Take Arina by the hand and come out! At once!"

"Come," said Gomozov to her, in a low voice.

Arina, with bowed head, came over to his side.

The door was opened; the chief appeared. He saluted and said, "My congratulations to the young couple! Forward! Strike up the band!"

Gomozov passed the threshold and came to a sudden halt, stupefied by a wild, confused tumult. Behind the door were Luka, Yagodka and Nikolai Petrovitch.

Luka was beating his fist against a pail, howling something in a quivering tenor voice; the soldier was blowing his bagpipe, and Matvei Yegorovitch was making wild gestures, his cheeks puffed out, and making a trumpet-like sound through his lips.

Pum, pum! Pum-pum-pum!

The pail thumped, the bagpipe wheezed and groaned, and Matvei Yegorovitch laughed madly. His aide, too, exploded with laughter when he beheld Gomozov in utter confusion, with a sinister face and silly laugh upon his trembling lips. Behind him was Arina, half petrified, her head bowed low upon her breast.

"Arina, to her lover,  
Spoke very tender words."

Luka sang, making terrible gestures in Gomozov's direction. And the soldier approached. Placing his bagpipe next to the switchman's ear he played on and on.

"Excellent. Now proceed, proceed. Arm in arm!" cried the chief.

His wife was seated in the vestibule, and she swayed from side to side, uttering penetrating shrieks.

"Motria, enough. Oh, I'll die of laughing!"

Who, for a taste of the beauty's lips,  
Wouldn't brave the stoutest whips?

It was the aide who sang, almost into Gomozov's ear.

"Long live the young couple!" shouted Matvei Yegorovitch as Gomozov took a step forward.

And from the throats of all rose a unanimous hurrah, the soldier shouting with a roaring bass.

Arina walked behind Gomozov with raised head, her mouth open, her arms hanging at her side. Her eyes peered vaguely forward, but it is doubtful whether they saw anything.

"Motria, order them to embrace. . . . Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bride and bridegroom, this is bitter!" shouted Nikolai Petrovitch, using the phrase employed at the embracing of a newly-wed pair.

And Matvei Yegorovitch leaned against a tree, for he was so weak from laughing that his feet shook beneath him.

And the pail kept dinning away, while the bagpipe wheezed and groaned, and Luka danced as he sang:

"Oh, lovely cook Arina,  
You've made us a pretty thick soup."

And Nikolai Petrovitch began once more to trumpet through his lips, "Pum, pum, pum! Tra, ta, ta! Pum, pum! Tra, ta, ta!"

Gomozov went as far as the door of a certain shanty and suddenly made his escape through it. Arina was left in the yard surrounded by her almost delirious persecutors. They shouted, laughed, whistled into her ears and jumped about her in a paroxysm of crazy joy.

Arina stood before them with impassive countenance, dirty, pitiful, ridiculous.

"The young bridegroom has gone off, and she. . . . remains here," shouted Matvei Yegorovitch to his wife, pointing to Arina and bursting anew into loud guffaws.

Arina turned her head toward him, walked by the cabin, and suddenly fled to the steppe. She was followed by a din of whistling, shouts and laughter.

"Enough! Let her alone!" shouted Sofia Ivanovna. "Let her get back her courage. She has to make dinner for us soon."

Arina went further and further into the steppe, yonder where, behind the land used for the railroad there arose the bristling fringes of the corn. She walked slowly, like one absorbed in her thoughts.

"What's that you say?" asked Matvei Yegorovitch of the various actors in the farce, who were recounting to each other the most trivial details of the event.

And everybody laughed. Even Nikolai Petrovitch found an aphorism for the occasion.

"In truth it is no sin  
To laugh at the ridiculous."

he said to Sofia Ivanovna.

And then he added, with an air of importance, "But to laugh excessively is unhealthy."

Despite this, there was a great deal of laughter in the station that day; but it didn't go so well with the eating, for, since Arina had not returned, the chief's wife had to do the cooking. Yet even the tasteless meal was not enough to extinguish the good humor of the group. Gomozov did not fare forth from the cabin until his duties called him, and when he came out he was summoned to the chief's office, where Nikolai Petrovitch, much to Matvei Yegorovitch's delight, asked him how he had succeeded in seducing his beauty.

"For its originality it is a sin of the first class," said Nikolai Petrovitch to the chief.

"It certainly is," assented the composed switchman with a forced laugh.

For he had suddenly begun to understand that by telling the story in a manner to cast ridicule upon Arina he himself would be less laughed at.

And he began:

"At first we made eyes at each other. . . ."

"Made eyes at each other? Ha, ha, ha! Just imagine, Nikolai Petrovitch, how an ugly thing like that would make eyes! This is delicious!"

"Well, but she did make them at me. And when I saw that, I said to myself, 'You can have a little amusement!' Then she asked me, 'Do you want me to sew your shirts?'"

"But the subtlety of the phrase was not in the sewing," observed Nikolai Petrovitch.

And he explained to the chief.

"That, you know, is from Nekrassov. Continue, Timofei."

And Timofei continued his explanations; at first he forced himself, then gradually he began to believe his own lie, for he saw that his lie was useful.

V

And meanwhile, she of whom he spoke was stretched out in the steppe. She had made her way into the depths of the sea of corn, and had dropped upon the earth, where she remained for a long time motionless. When the hot sun began to burn her shoulder until she could stand it no longer, she turned over with her mouth facing the sky, covering her face with her hands, so that her eyes should not see the heavens, which were too clear, nor the sun, which was too bright.

Under the breath of the wind the corn produced a weak noise about that woman crushed with shame, and the countless crickets chirped tirelessly, as if intent upon very important business. And it was hot. The woman tried to recall her prayers, but she could not. Before her eyes there swayed in a wild dance faces contracted with laughter, while in her ears boomed the tenor voice of Luka and the mocking, querulous notes of the bagpipe, and the resounding shouts. Either this, or the heat, oppressed her bosom; she tore open her chemise, exposed her skin to the rays of the sun, hoping, perhaps, that in this way

she might breathe more comfortably. And while the sun toasted her skin, a strange sensation burrowed about within her breast. With deep sighs, from time to time she murmured, "Good God, I entreat You!"

But the only response that came to her ears was the dry rustling of the corn and the chirping of the crickets. When she raised her head above the waves of the corn she beheld its golden reflection, the black chimney of the water-house that rose behind the station in the little valley, and the roof of the house in which they were all laughing at her plight. There was nothing else in the boundless yellow plain, covered by the blue dome of heaven, and to Arina it seemed that she was all alone in the world, — that she was stretched out exactly in its centre, and that there was none who would offer to share with her the burden of solitude.

At night she heard cries.

"Arina! Arina, — the devil!"

One of the voices she recognized as Luka's, — the other was the soldier. She would have liked to hear a certain other voice, but that one was not heard; then she began to weep copiously. The tears ran down her cheeks and on to her bosom. She wept, and as she wept she rubbed her naked skin against the earth, so as not to feel the inner burning that tormented her more and more. She cried, then tried to stop, stifling her groans, as if afraid that someone would hear her and forbid her to cry.

Afterward, when night had come, she arose and walked slowly toward the station.

Arrived there she leaned against the wall of the shack, and there she remained a long time, her gaze fixed upon the steppe. She could make out a freight train and she heard the soldier relating the story of her shame, and heard the laughter of the conductors.

The night was peaceful, a moonlit night. . . . The loud guffaws echoed afar, across the desolate steppe, where the sound of the locomotive's whistle died away.

"Good Lord, I beg You!" sighed the woman, leaning more heavily against the wall.

But her sighs did not lighten the burden that she felt upon her heart.

VI

The next morning she made her way into the attic of the station and hanged herself, using a rope that formerly had served for putting out clothes to dry.

Two days later, on account of the odor of the body, the corpse was discovered. At first they were afraid, then they began to inquire as to who was to blame. Nikolai Petrovitch demonstrated conclusively that it was Gomozov's fault. The chief then struck Gomozov with his closed fist and ordered the switchman to shut up.

The authorities began to investigate. As a result they found that Arina used to suffer from attacks of melancholy. . . . The laborers about the station were ordered to bury the corpse in the steppe. And when this had been carried out, order and quiet returned to the station.

And its inhabitants began to live their four minutes per day, dying of monotony and solitude, of idleness and the heat. With envious glances they followed the trains that sped past them.

And in winter, when the tempests, in a wild charge, loosen their fury upon the steppe, and boom their wailings, and envelop the station in snow and wild shrieks, the life of its denizens becomes more monotonous than ever.

# A Little Garland of Mexican Verse

TRANSLATED BY ALICE STONE BLACKWELL

## A WISH

BY MANUEL GUTIERREZ NAJERA

See'st thou the ivy, how it clings and catches  
In every crack of the dark altar here?  
As round the marble stone it wreathes its branches  
I would wreath round thy heart, my treasure dear.

See how the moonbeam penetrates the water  
Tranquil and still, nor doth its peace offend!  
As the lagoon the quiet moonbeam enters  
Into thy soul's depths I would fain descend.

My dreams, benumbed with cold, I seek to shelter  
Within thine innocent and tender breast,  
As birds, when winter nights come cold upon them,  
Shelter themselves within the downy nest.

## SNOW-FLAKE

BY SALVADOR DIAZ MIRON

To soothe my pain because thou canst not love me,  
Gazing upon me with an angel's air  
Thou dost immerse thy fingers, cool and pallid,  
In the dark mane of my tempestuous hair.

'Tis vain, O woman! Thou dost not console me.  
We are a world apart, in naught the same.  
If thou art snow, then why dost thou not freeze me?  
Why do I melt thee not, if I am flame?

Thy hand, so spiritual and transparent,  
When it caresses my submissive head,  
Is but the snow-cap crowning the volcano,  
Whose burning lava-depths beneath it spread!

MY FOUNTAIN

By LUIS G. ORTIZ

Hard by the cottage, innocent and free,  
Where swayed my cradle — near that hidden cot,  
Its ripples overflowing from their grot,  
Bursts forth my fountain, lost in greenery.

When the new moon was mirrored radiantly  
On its clear wave in that sequestered spot,  
How oft I cried, "Oh, happy is their lot  
Who cross the vast expanses of the sea!"  
It was God's will that I the deck should tread,  
And find my wish to full fruition grown  
Amid the billows of the tossing sea.

God in the deep I saw, and bowed my head;  
And now, upon the sea, I dream alone,  
My humble, sweet and murmurous fount, of thee!

THE STARS

By MANUEL JOSE OTHON

Who says that men, as we look down to see  
From the deep ocean of the azure sky,  
Seem but like motes before the wind that fly,  
Or worms that creep and die, of low degree?

Not so! Their brains, that throb with courage free,  
These are a marvel that naught else comes nigh —  
Forges where thoughts upon the anvil lie,  
Brighter by far than we can ever be.

Beneath that little arch of pallid clay  
We see ideas with flaming splendor beam,  
Defying time and space and mortal bars.

Compared with these, to us who watch alway,  
Ashes and dust doth all creation seem:  
Stars are dead matter; human brows are stars!

#### SPARE THE NESTS

BY LUIS G. URBINA

Is it a nest? It is a nest! See, 'mid the branches hidden,  
The light breeze rocks it; with their gold the sunbeams make it  
glad.

Oh, know you what a nest is? It is that which most you cherish,  
What laughs with you in happiness and mourns when you are  
sad.

Is it a home? It is a home, pure love's most holy refuge;  
There to the birds, together, warmth and sweet sleep night  
brings.

The forest boughs are tossing, the sky grows dark — no matter!  
Being so great, the Lord above takes care of tiny things.

These palaces among its leaves the woodland shades and shelters;  
They are its fairest ornament, when in spring's gala dressed.  
The bird that through the fields of space flies freely in the sun-  
light

Knows that he has a nook wherein to fold his wings and rest.

The nests are shrines of peace and love, — dear, holy sanctuaries.  
Wicked the hands which tear them down, with wantonness and  
jest!

Oh, know you not that in this world no sadder sight can greet  
us

Than dry and withered blossoms, or shattered, ruined nests?

A SONG OF HANDS

BY JESUS E. VALENZUELA

Hands — like soft blossoming buds —  
Of children that search for the breast,  
In the calm sea of love's gaze  
Cradled and sweetly caressed!  
Small hands of Jesus the Christ,  
In glory ineffably bright;  
Hands like soft blossoming buds,  
Hands bathed in milk and in light.

Fairy hands, nimble and fair,  
O'er the piano that stray  
Like a vague dream of life, or the void —  
A dream from some realm far away!  
The winged expression are ye  
Of a sigh, or some cry on the air,  
Floating in infinite space,  
Fairy hands, nimble and fair.

Hands of an ivory white,  
In the shade of the mantle obscure,  
Brightening prayer with their gleams  
Gentle and starlike and pure!  
Through their whiteness have passed all the woes  
That ever humanity knew,  
With the rosary's beads, one by one —  
O hands of the ivory's hue!

Hands full of charity's grace,  
Which to the hungry by night  
Carry forth comfort and food,  
Bread of hope's joy, of truth's light!  
Noble, mysterious hands,  
Of kindness unending, sincere!  
Brothers are we, one and all,  
Hands full of charity dear!

O pale, perished hands of the dead  
For love or as martyrs who died!  
Leaves of one lily are ye,  
Hands that were clasped or spread wide;  
Hands full of questions, desires,  
Aspirations and yearnings unsaid —  
Hands to the heavens outstretched,  
O pale, perished hands of the dead!

Hands with the sword in their grasp,  
That by warfare a sceptre have won,  
And fill the whole world with the flood  
Of rivers of blood that o'errun!  
Hands of the common folk, armed  
When quarrels or battles have birth —  
Hands with the sword in their grasp,  
Red hands of the great ones of earth! . . .

Hands that are bleeding and hard,  
That plough up the stern, arid soil,  
And scarce feel the flight of the hours,  
So heavy and cruel the toil;  
Hands in the workshops that sweat,  
That set up the type in all lands,  
Hands that meet death in the mines —  
Hard, rough and blood-spotted hands!

Hands that are wonted to toil,  
Strong hands of the brave and the free!  
When on the heights, in the depths,  
Vibrates o'er land and o'er sea,  
Stirring the world from its roots,  
The anger of justice on fire —  
Hands that are wonted to toil,  
You shall that day hold the lyre!

# Short-Story Art and the Magazines

BY A MAGAZINE EDITOR

WHAT is the first thing to look for in a story? The same as the last thing — interest. You may enlarge as you please on the answer, but if the word is understood, that one word is enough. The interest of a story may be the interest of horror, or of pity, or puzzlement, or humor, or the charm of a personality. As for method and technique, the particular manner of telling a story matters nothing. All the writer need think of is to deliver his interest to the reader. Nobody but an editor cares how he does it. I have been put to sleep in perfect form, and I have been profoundly stirred by stories told in a manner so crude that the crudeness amounted to a fascination in itself. It made me believe, where art would have left me skeptical. If a writer has something to tell me, I don't care how he does it so long as I catch the point. Charm of manner never counts in itself. A story is like a man. If it is dressed in faultless taste, so much the better; but inside the clothes there must be a genuine and likable human thing, or the story is a tailor's dummy.

This is not to belittle artistry. If a writer has burning things to say, he will soon enough learn how to drive home his point with cunning. Indeed, without some cunning, some artistry, he will be helpless. He will be tongue-tied. He will be equally helpless if he has nothing but a cunning art, a jugglery of words to offer. It has always seemed to me that three writers of established fame refined their art till it took on the artificiality of a painted lady. The importance of what they had to say they befogged in the affectations of saying it. Balzac wrote in a cumbersome style, yet he is twice the man in Flaubert. Dickens was without the polish of Thackeray, and yet Turgenev is a great writer at least for one reason — because he was first of all a great artist. It all comes back to the question of interest. A man may say things smoothly or not, if only he has something to tell the human crowd.

An English critic of wit and wisdom lately remarked on the curious void in our letters after Whitman. Except for William and Henry James, he could see no one of unmistakably first importance. Instead there are hundreds of only clever men and women. I think this is a stage in development. Hundreds of periodicals have opened the avenues of expression to so many hundreds of writers that the truly gifted man or woman is lost in the crowd. His opportunities of appearance are more limited; the very chances of his discovery, before his death by a broken heart, are lamentably reduced. Moreover the conditions of publication make for the establishment of stereotyped forms of expression. The competition among the magazines obliges them to go forward with the utmost caution. An editor brings his publication to a certain success, and he thereupon fears to quarrel with that success. His temptation is to go on printing the same sort of story that made him prosperous in the first place. He dreads to experiment. Whereas the new writer is sure to be original and daring in the degree of his talent. He breaks all the editor's established rules, and is punished with rejections.

Still more, the success of one publication induces imitation in all the others. The result of this is a certain sameness in all our periodicals. In playing safe they play inevitably toward mediocrity, and they are all apt to play alike. Under such a blanket, originality is stifled. The writer of force and talent, who might add a new note to our literature, is not allowed to write in his own way, the one way suited to complete expression of himself. If he wants to appear at all, he must conform to these editorial tastes, themselves the natural outgrowth of the conditions of publication. To borrow again the sartorial simile, if stories are like men, editors are like a tailors' congress, dictating the styles to writers. The man of talent must dress in their prescribed garb, or stay away from their party. If they consent to don the uniform, there they sit about the magazine pages, prim and constrained. Until somebody with courage breaks this pall, we shall go on having no figures of the first importance. And the man to break it will have to be a daring rebel.

I can't help thinking that a rebel editor would soon summon about him a crowd of rebel writers. They would leap at his invitation. Our great era in literature came in the second and third quarters of the 19th Century. All editors were more or less rebels then, because there were fewer publications, and the editor was able to choose as he pleased, without an eye on his competitors. He was privileged to give the writer a free rein and let himself go. All that the writer had in him he was permitted to bellow forth. At present rebellion must necessarily be a risky experiment. After all it is advertising that supports periodical publication, and advertising shies at the risky experiment and reposes safely with the established success. Not that editors as they are do not boast of the occasional new writer. He is generally the writer who contrives to say the same old things in a slightly fresher manner. O. Henry was the only modern figure who managed to say what he wanted to say, and fool the editors too. But some day the rebel editor will appear. A rebel public will page the country for him. The American reader is far more independent, far more cultivated, far more sophisticated than the successful editor is willing to believe. You cannot, of course, convince him of the contrary. Has he not his million or so circulation to point to, in proof that the public likes what he prints? The answer is that the public buys what it can get. Unfortunately there is yet no rebel publication in proof of the intelligence of a public that wants something better, more outspoken and daring. But I believe such a publication will come. It will come for a very excellent reason — it will be good business. The new demand is rising, and in time it will be noticed and met.

Until that time it is scarcely well worth while to talk of short stories. We turn out excellent pieces of workmanship. The standard of excellence among them is truly remarkable. The formula is well-nigh perfect, as formula. But nobody is hardy enough to regard them as blazing revelations of life. The editor of a very honorable and ancient periodical wrote not long ago, "If a new Balzac should arise among us, he would be hailed with mingled fear and delight." He wouldn't be

hailed at all. Not under present conditions. Nevertheless I am sure that the rising intelligence, the sharpening taste, the spread of education, the gathering number of readers among us — as evidence in the swelling circulations! — will one day compel a change, an improvement. Some shrewd man will start a rebel sheet, and start it with the sinews to insure a thorough experiment. If it does not succeed I shall be as much mortified as mistaken. And if it does succeed, imitation will quickly copy its example.

Then we may expect to have more names to write down after Hawthorne, Irving, Bret Harte, and O. Henry; and other names like Balzac, Gautier, Maupassant; like Turgenev and Hardy. By that I mean we shall not have merely copies of their manner, which we have now; but copies of their outlook, which we certainly have not. It is simply unbelievable that the dazzling spectacle of our life as a people will not at some inevitable time invite the truly capable painter of its variety and brilliance. It is simply unbelievable that a great people will not want its portrait greatly painted, and that a people so rich will not make the painting worth the painter's while. Editorial policy then will be allowed to become more liberal, because such liberality will pay. Today I am morally sure that Irving's sketches, if freshly written and freshly submitted, would be declined as "lacking in plot." That they are works of art would be ignored. Their charm would be acknowledged, but nothing of that sort would count against the glaring defect of a lacking in plot. As much would be said to make Hawthorne eat his heart while he waited for his rebel editor. The "power" of Maupassant would be cheerfully granted, but his view of life would be considered too "cynical" for that much maligned infant, Our Readers. That wonderfully haunting and fugitive theme which Balzac has taken in one of the greatest of his stories, "Une Episode sous le Terreur," the emotion of an executioner who beheaded his king, made almost excruciatingly poignant by Balzac's magic, would be thought "a little too slight," though the editor might crave to see more of such promising work.

But we ought to be printing these stories. We ought to

be able to offer to young writers a set of conditions that would encourage them to the writing of such stories, if so be they had it in them. As it is, how many such great stories may be floating about now, written or unwritten, we have no means of knowing in this hush of mediocrity that has settled upon us. For my part I believe they are there, written or ready to be written at the first encouragement. In the course of my work I've seen approaches to stories of the real stamp, close enough to justify an optimistic belief in what we should have if our writers could be thawed out of the chill atmosphere of timidity we have cast over them. They seldom write what they might, because they are made to believe it would be useless. Just now there is much talk of short story technique. The colleges, some of them, have established courses in this. The magazines bear advertisements of persons offering to teach by correspondence the mysteries of this art. That is to say we are training many elocutionists, and breeding no orators. Out of all this Babel, so little real eloquence! It is useless, in my estimation, to be training young writers until we can promise them a real opportunity of having their say. And it is useless to expect that opportunity till the miraculous arrival of that fairly Lutheran courage and force which it will take to break up the hierarchy of conditions that dictates present editorial standards.

There are writers today, of course, who have threaded their way through these adverse conditions to a certain eminence. I freely grant it. They are not a confutation but a proof of what I have said. They prove not editorial leniency in their favor, not an instant editorial recognition of their lonely possession of talent; they have only proved of their own strength against this editorial inertia. They are not simply clever in their work; they are more than clever in performing such work in the face of such discouragements. My point is, how much more than clever they might be if they had not to use half their cleverness in making their way but only to express themselves as fully as they might in circumstances that offered them the uttermost of freedom in place of the uttermost of restraint. The outstanding names in current short fiction have been made not in answer to a royal welcome but in defiance of

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THE STRATFORD JOURNAL

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conditions unfriendly to the flowering out of talent. They testify to the fund of talent that must be latent in this mass of a hundred million people of every blood and temperament, living a life rich to plethora with the materials of art, and wanting only the removal of this curious smother at the top to spring to life. I am sure the seeds of talent must be plentiful in the rich soil of American life, but the climate is unfriendly to their germination.

As one of the craft I commiserate the editors of magazines. I believe many of them are dissatisfied without knowing what is the matter; or if they know, they are powerless to effect a change. For that there is needed the fanatic reformer. It may be that we must wait for this frigid inertia of conditions to melt away of its own accord. There is no accounting for genius. It comes like the tides of the sea. There are long ebbs, and then genius appears in waves. It appears in the editorial chair, in the business office, as it appears among writers. And the imaginative writer gets nowhere without the imaginative editor to encourage him. But until the present pall passes off in obedience to natural laws, or until some Luther happens along to nail his Theses to the door, such discussions as "What Constitutes a Short Story?" or "How to Write One," belong with the ancient riddle, "How many angels can stand on the point of a needle?"

# Anthony Trollope

BY S. J. ROSENBAUM

WHEN I am not particularly indignant at the sins of society, or do not require any broad relaxation from the serious affairs of the day — when in from the dusty streets and dustier routine of this workaday world — in the cool of the evening, I like to transport myself to the meadows and lanes, the fox-hunting fields and cathedral towns of Barsetshire.

That Barsetshire exists, no reader of the works of Anthony Trollope can doubt. There may be more delightful parsons, more charming girls, more hard riding squires, in a more genial landed gentry within the covers of books, than in the Barsetshire series, but if so, we have not yet been bidden to meet them. Not to say that all Trollope's people are of this innocuous sort, for he had a keen eye for the foibles and shams of his day, but his thrust is not so savage, his lance not so keen as that of writers like Dickens, Thackeray or Reade who, valiants in assailing the evils of their time, waxed indignant in the battle. But Trollope seemed to see

“With calm discriminating sight  
Black's not so black, nor white so very white”

and while his stories are not studies in high lights and deep shadows they have an engaging sincerity void of the sensational. He deals in no mysteries. There are no secrets from the reader, and we are told a tale by the evening lamp that does not bring weird shadows to the wall. A tale of the mild — but no less active — intrigue and commonplace drama of every day life. His characters are all quite human; monstrosities in persons or deeds are absent and his interest lies in his healthy realism and a certain shrewd humor that enlivens his pages. His intuition for humbug is more than passing strong and his books abound with little ironical allusions to some of the pretensions and pretenders of society in general.

His rascals — whom he presents with an amusing adroitness

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— are not the debonair profligates of Thackeray, nor yet the desperate scoundrels of Dickens but are put in his canvas in more neutral colors. They are usually subordinate types in the comedy of manners that their author sets forth. Commercial rogues, usurers, shifty attorneys, self-seeking ecclesiastics give his narrative just that touch of the picaresque that redeems its sometimes too placid flow.

Perhaps Trollope's sure touch is seen in the feminine characters in which his books abound. His gallery of females is large in scope and variety and so convincing is his delineation that some of his minor figures amongst the ladies linger long in the memory after their literary background is forgotton.

If that is the highest art that conceals art, Trollope must take rank among the great, for while he wrote reams that do not do him credit, his best work is done in an easy style that makes it as agreeable as a tale told by an old friend in the firelight. He is eminently human, and sometimes, — though not often — he has an almost idyllic sweetness. As has been said, his satire was not vitriolic; his wrath was not quickened by the iniquities of individuals or of systems but his work throughout was marked by a quiet pungency more charitable than bitter, more kindly than austere.

## Eyes

BY FRANK LUTHER MOTT

THE fact that a dull pain lay just back of Mandy's eyes had nothing to do with the fact that she did not see the sunset before her. Her eyes still functioned: she might have seen those changing splendors if she had lifted her eyes. But she leaned on the gate of the cow-yard and looked down into the mud and filth; and her dreamy and listless mind was filled with nothing but a dull hate of the mud, and the filth, and the whole farm, and Nature, and life, and whatever God there might be. That dull hate crowded out the dull ache that always lay, in these days, behind her eyes.

Mandy Simmons was a tall, angular girl, of eighteen years perhaps. Her faded and soiled dress in some way accentuated her angularity, as she leaned on the long wooden gate. A milk pail, tarnished and old, stood on the ground near her bare feet.

The sun was going down in glory.

Lakes of crimson and rivers of gold, splashed half-way around the world, and shading off into a thousand delicate, changing tints, flooded the evening sky. One old scraggly tree on a bit of a rise in the west meadow threw its great gnarled arms ghost-like and dark against the gorgeous background.

Moment by moment the lakes of crimson and the rivers of gold shifted and changed and took other shapes and forms as though an invisible scene-shifter were at work arranging yet other settings for the Pageant of the Dying Day. Streamers of lavender and rose and silver and gray appeared slowly for the wings, and lengthened to the north and south; and a vast drop of purple and gold descended to the rim of the world where the great yellow disc was just disappearing.

The winds died down. A hush came over the world. Nature held her breath, awaiting the moment of the death of Day and the birth of Night.

In the farmyard in the valley, Mandy Simmons leaned on the gate and stared at the mud. The cows stood off toward

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one end of the yard, breathing audibly in the hot stillness, and chewing their cuds with lazy regularity, while their tails lashed continuously at the innumerable host of flies that covered their backs and sides. For a long time the girl did not move a muscle.

“Mandy!” came a shrill voice from behind her, presently. “What’s the matter with you? Git to pailin’ them cows! Don’t you know it’s gittin’ dark? Where’s that Jen? Stir your stumps, girl!”

Without looking about her, the girl stooped and picked up her milk pail, climbed over the heavy gate with the ease of long practice, and went squishing through the mud to the cows. She did not look up. She squatted down beside one of them, close up to the beast’s hot body, and began milking into the pail which she set down in the mud.

The lake of crimson slowly turned to purple; the river of gold shaded to gray and rose; the upper rim of the sun sank behind the world; the ancient tree on the rise in the west meadow threw its arms darkly against the after-glow; and a little vagrant breeze sprang up to rustle the branches of the trees where the birds were sleepily chirping little good-night songs.

But none of the breeze found its way down into the little hot cow-yard, where the girl was making the warm milk foam in the pail.

“Have you been cryin’, Mandy?” queried Mrs. Simmons, as her daughter helped her take up the supper.

“No,” replied Mandy, “but my eyes are that sore!”

“They look awful red,” said her mother.

The conversation went no further. There was never much conversation between Mandy and her mother. Mrs. Simmons had long ago confessed to herself that she did not understand her oldest daughter very well, and more recently Mandy’s “glumness” had repelled her. Mrs. Simmons was a colorless, worn-out little woman. Whatever there might have been in her face when she was a girl, now there was little left but a sort of stupid hardness. Jim Simmons would undoubtedly have admitted, if he had stopped to think about it, that he had a “good

woman"—a hard worker, with no fancy notions. But Jim was always driven by his work, and had no time to stop and think, or to look about him, or up at the sky. There was nothing about the sky or about his wife that demanded much attention: they were to be taken as a matter of course. The Simmonses had seven children, and with the help of the four older ones Mrs. Simmons did all the cooking, sewing and house-work, made the garden, did the milking and took care of the milk, usually fed the hogs, and often helped in the field.

You see, Jim Simmons was very poor. He had always been poor. His father had been "dead poor" before him. He had been brought up to work hard early and late, summer and winter, and still be poor. So, for that matter, had Mrs. Simmons. Hard work was life to them; and life was hard work. Jim's hours of labor were nearly as long as his wife's: they began before sun-up and lasted far into the night. "Them Simmonses," as they were called in the community, had few pleasures, but missed those they lacked the less for never having known them.

Jim Simmons often said he had a miserable poor piece of land. It was that rough it was hard to farm. If they had stopped to think of it, the Simmonses would have found they all hated every foot of the farm, especially the wild waste land, including the old quarry and the acres covered by woods and stones and wild-growing things. It really made them a poor living, but they hadn't quite starved any winter yet, and when the boys got a little bigger so they could help with the work more, maybe things would go better.

Supper was late at the Simmons home. Jim and the two older boys had been shocking oats on the north forty. The grain was on the ground, and indications of rain had made Jim resolve to get all the grain in shock before they quit for the night. It seemed as though the work on the Simmons farm was never done in due course; it was always driving them. For instance, the grain was not cut when it should have been: it was over-ripe, and shattered when the leaves were handled, so that Jim had decided not to shock it at all. The work drove

Jim by day and he dreamed about it by night. He dreamed repeatedly of getting up in the night and going out and working at some task or other until he dropped from fatigue.

When the men-folks came in from the oat-field it was ten o'clock. They washed wearily at the rough wash-stand just outside the kitchen door, and then came into the dining-room where a kerosene lamp burned odorously in the center of the supper table. The three younger children had been fed and put to bed, but the two older boys and Mandy and her sister Jennie sat down with their parents to a supper of fried ham, eggs fried hard and heaped on a platter, and plentiful fried potatoes. Coffee, too, was supplied in abundance, and bread in great slices, with soft butter. But of conversation there was little.

"Finish the oats!" asked Mrs. Simmons.

"Um-huh," replied Jim, his mouth full of hot potatoes.

All ate greedily to satisfy hunger born of hard work outdoors—except Mandy. Mandy stopped eating long before the others had finished.

"Jim," said Mrs. Simmons to her husband, "we've got to do something about Mandy's eyes."

"What's the matter? Been cryin' again?" asked Jim of his daughter.

"No; I ain't been cryin'," she replied. "My eyes are just awful sore. They hurt clear back into my head. They've been gettin' worse and worse."

Jim Simmons peered around the lamp which was set in the middle of the table, that he might better see his daughter's face. Even in the poor light he could see her reddened eyelids. A stranger, who had not seen Mandy every day, might have been struck by other features of the girl's face. It had a thin, eager, almost hungry look, and there was a sort of pallor, despite the freckles. Mandy's face was different from the faces of the other Simmons children, as her mother had often said.

Jim noted her red eyelids. Then he took a gulp of coffee.

"Reckon you'll have to git along," he said. "I ain't got no money to spend on doctors." Then he added, brutally, "I

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don't want no complainin', neither. Shut up and eat your supper."

But Mandy pushed back her chair and went out into the kitchen, where she could be heard working with the pans and kettles.

"Don't be too hard on the girl," remonstrated Mrs. Simmons.

"I ain't hard on her!" roared Jim, striking the table. "You shut up, too!"

And Mrs. Simmons, knowing that her husband was very tired from a long day's work, did not continue the argument. Mrs. Simmons always excused Jim's fits of temper to herself by thinking how hard Jim worked. She knew her husband for a kind and gentle man, and she appreciated in her own tired, dull way, the difficulties he continually fought.

It was the next afternoon when Mrs. Simmons and Mandy were picking blackberries that something happened which gave Mrs. Simmons courage to speak to Jim again about Mandy's eyes. Picking blackberries was not very pleasant work, for the bushes had not been trimmed for years, and the women's clothes were constantly being caught on the brambles and their hands and even their faces were often scratched. The sun shone upon them fiercely as they worked.

Mrs. Simmons was hardened to this working in the sun. She worked steadily, slowly filling the little pail that hung from a string she had tied around her waist.

As she worked over the patch, she suddenly came upon Mandy sitting down among the brambles, her sunbonnet pushed back and her face in her hands, and making a low, moaning sound.

"Mandy!" exclaimed her mother. "Is it your eyes? What are you doing?"

"Oh, Ma," replied Mandy, "they hurt dreadful! They hurt me all last night. This here sun hurts 'em worse'n ever."

"Why didn't you say something about it before? You're that glum you wouldn't say a word if you was dyin'. You

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better go in the house and put some cold water on your eyes, and send Jen out here."

Mandy followed her mother's directions and through the rest of the afternoon lay on the bed in a stuffy up-stairs room with a wet cloth over her eyes.

That evening at the supper-table, her mother spoke again about the girl's eyes. Jim tried to pass the matter over as he had done the evening before. He chose to think it was "just a dodge of the girl's" to get out of helping with the work. And when Mrs. Simmons suggested taking Mandy in to see old Dr. Snowden, Jim closed the whole discussion much as he had the night before; he told them all to shut up and eat their suppers.

But the women's work was so arranged thereafter that Mandy had to work in the bright sun no more. The household drudgery fell to Mandy's lot, but work in the garden, berry-patch and field was done by Mrs. Simmons and Jennie.

Mandy's eyes, however, did not get better; indeed, they grew worse week by week until she would sit for hours at a time with her face in her hands; and in the night Jennie, who slept with her, was kept awake by her moans, and no cold, wet cloths would assuage the pain.

But after weeks of such suffering, Mandy was taken to town to see the doctor. Dr. Snowden, a kindly, bespectacled old fellow with a long white beard, would not commit himself.

"Look here, Jim," he said after he had examined the girl. "You'll have to take this young lady to a specialist in the city. I won't say what the trouble is."

Jim looked very sober, but said not a word. He nodded to Mandy to follow, and they left the doctor's office in silence. The journey home was made in their old rattle-trap of a buggy, and the constant rattling of the vehicle was not broken in upon by a word from either father or daughter.

That night Mandy lay on her bed and said over and over, "I'm going blind. I'm going blind."

"Oh, I guess not," remonstrated her sister Jennie.

"Yes, I am. I'm going blind. And I did want to see things so! Now I'll never see things!"

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"Why, Mandy," said her sister, "did the doctor say you were going to go blind?"

"No; but I know. And I always planned on seeing things! Out of this — away from here! I was always going to see everything out in the world, Jen. But I'm going blind!"

Mandy and her father had been to see the specialist in the city. When they got off the train at the village where they always did their trading and whence they were now to drive home, Mandy's eyes were covered by a white bandage, and her father was leading her by the arm. The group about the village station watched them curiously as they stepped from the train, Jim holding Mandy's arm.

"What d' the doctors say?" asked Jed Parker of Jim.

"Pretty bad," said Jim slowly, not turning his head. But his friends noticed how his lips were set in a hard, straight line, and the dumb pain in his dull eyes.

Guiding his daughter carefully, Jim passed on up the street to where they had left their horse and buggy early that morning, out in front of the general store. As Jim was untying the horse, the store-keeper came out.

"The girl's eyes pretty bad?" he asked.

Jim hesitated. Then, "Pretty bad," was the reply again.

With an expression of sympathy the store-keeper turned back into the store.

Climbing into the buggy, Jim drove slowly down the main street of the village and along the familiar road to the farm. Gazing straight ahead of him as he was, he did not notice Dr. Snowden until the old man's "Hello!" startled him. Dr. Snowden drove an ancient horse hitched to a buggy quite as full of rattles and quite as precarious in appearance as the Simmons buggy. Despite the doctor's spectacles and long white beard and rusty black clothes, his voice was young and hearty and good-natured.

"Hello! Back a'ready?" he shouted.

Jim pulled up. "Just back," he said.

There was no need for Dr. Snowden to ask the verdict of

the specialist. He could see the fate of the daughter in the eyes of the father.

"How long will it be?" he asked.

"Six weeks," said Jim.

"Oh, that's a long time!" replied the old doctor, cheerfully. "Does she have to wear the bandage?"

"He give her some stuff to do away with the pain, but after a few days she kin take the bandage off and her eyes won't hurt her no more, but in six week—" Jim hesitated.

"Six weeks! Oh, she can see lots of things in six weeks!" Dr. Snowden broke in.

Mandy began crying softly, her head bent forward in her hands.

"Stop the crying!" commanded the doctor. "That'll do no good."

"But I wanted to see things!" sobbed the girl.

The doctor seemed to understand.

"Yes, girl, I know. And you can, too; six weeks you have to see the world. Six weeks."

Then Dr. Snowden clucked to his old horse and drove on.

Jim Simmons did not fully understand. His thoughts were too fully occupied with the remembrance of his own stubborn refusal for the past month to take Mandy to a doctor. He could not get his mind off the question he had been afraid to ask the doctors—could Mandy's sight have been saved if he had brought her to them sooner? The thought of his stubbornness, which had had nothing of reason behind it—nothing at all but his feeling of dire poverty—had been a dull pain in his breast for days. And there was, too, the wonderment as to what Mandy, and her mother, and all of them, would do when Mandy went blind. The old horse jogged monotonously along, slackening once in a while into a walk, presently to be urged to his slow jogging again by the slapping of the reins on his back and the cluck of the driver. The old buggy rattled and rattled along through the dust. The journey seemed interminable, but at last they approached home. When they drove into the yard, Mrs. Simmons came hurrying from the kitchen.

— “What did they say?” she asked. Then she noticed the bandage over the girl’s eyes.

“Is it — is she —” The mother stopped and looked a little wildly first at her daughter and then at her husband.

Jim got heavily out of the buggy, and then, very tenderly for a man so little accustomed to tenderness, he helped Mandy out. Mrs. Simmons in a moment had her arms about her daughter.

“What did the doctors say?” she demanded.

Jim was tying the horse. “They said — six weeks — she can see for six weeks, Ma — then she will be — blind.”

They stood there — mother and child — the girl in the festive cheapness of her best dress, and with the broad white bandage around her head, the thin figure of the mother in her faded old dress — her face faded and old, too — and they cried together. Then hard-worked, hard-handed, poverty-driven Jim Simmons put his great arms around them both, and because there was nothing else he could think of to say, he said, in a choked sort of voice,

“Doc Snowden says she can see a lot of things in six weeks, Ma.”

The third day after her interview with the specialist, Mandy Simmons sat in a rocking-chair on the shady side of the house, watching a storm come up. Mandy, marked by Fate and the specialist for blindness, occupied a very different position in the household from Mandy of the sore eyes. Now she was relieved of all household tasks and given opportunity to enjoy her six weeks of sight so far as she was able in her own way. Of course she would have chosen to go away from the familiar spot, to view the new and wonderful scenes of which she had dreamed, while she yet had seeing eyes, but Poverty’s hand bears hard on all her children, regardless of disease, blindness or death. So Mandy sat here waiting, her pain almost gone, as the doctors had promised, and the bandage discarded.

And as she waited that day, the dark battalions of the storm gathered in the northern horizon. Lightning flashes split the black clouds intermittently. Over the hilly little farm the

sun still shone, but now its light was of an unnatural and ghostly brightness in the face of the coming storm. As the main battalions advanced, they sent out a vanguard of lighter clouds that soon hid the face of the sun. Suddenly the wind, which had been blowing stiffly from the southeast, veered around to the north, and then the real assault began. The whole northern sky became a slatey black with little skiffs of light gray clouds, betokening wind, as couriers before the main body of the storm. The thunder of the attacking artillery shook the earth.

Mandy's breath came short as she caught the brilliant contrast in colors before her eyes. There was her father's oat-field, irregular in its hilly outline, standing brightly out, a light yellow against the purple and slate and black of the oncoming storm. The little shocks of oats were outlined so clearly, so wonderfully; they seemed to grow more silvery as the darkness of the storm deepened. Then came a breathless moment before the charge. Through it, her father and the boys racing home before the rain. Suddenly a great puff of wind, herald of the cohorts, then a blinding flash, a final tremendous crash of thunder, and then the rain. Mandy still watched the storm through the screen door. Torrents of rain, then pelting hail with wind, then a steady downpour.

Mandy sat in her rocking chair and closed her eyes. Immediately there came into her vision those light-yellow, shock-covered hills against the purple storm. The sight thrilled her again.

"I'll never forget that," she thought to herself.

Then she recalled Dr. Snowden's words: "You can see lots of things in six weeks!"

"I guess he is right," said Mandy to herself.

She could hardly wait for the rain to subside to get out of doors.

Every day after that found Mandy out among the hills and valleys of her father's farm. Sometimes, following a little creek, she would wander a mile or two from home, but she found enough on the "Simmons place" alone to absorb her attention.

An abandoned quarry at one corner of the farm was her favorite haunt. The most beautiful of ferns were to be found there, and wild flowers of many sorts. Mandy grew to love the picturesque sky-line that was formed by the jagged bluff, crowned by a few old trees, cutting the clear blue of the sky. She loved to lie on her back and look up into some clear space between trees' foliage and watch the birds circling in the deep blue of the sky. She learned to know the different kinds of birds, and named them with names of her own fancy.

Long hours, too, she sat by the stream that zig-zagged through her father's land and watched the flies play on the surface of the water; or she watched the tadpoles and minnows and frogs in some tiny, quiet back-water; or she wandered along the creek-side hunting some particular flower or grass or stone.

Never a sunset in that early fall did Mandy miss. When the sun lighted up the under side of a great cloud to make one vast mass of flaming red fire, she wanted to cry out with glory of it all. Or when, in a clear sky, the sun set in a field of pure "gold, like unto glass;" or when every tiny cloudlet was gilded and transformed into grotesque, hobgoblin shapes, Mandy clapped her hands in delight — as though she, of all the world, were the audience for which these pageants were being exhibited by the great Master of the Show.

Mandy could not fill her days full enough. She would get up before the sun, that she might see the glow of the "false dawn" before the sun's red disc was slowly drawn up over the rim of the world, and might yield her dawn-tribute quite as naturally as the birds did in their morning songs. And she could not go to her bed until long after the sleepy songs of the birds had died into silence — for the birds had no need to look up into the infinite spaces of the stars.

Wandering along the road under a lane of trees one evening, she met old Dr. Snowden driving his rattley old buggy leisurely by. The evening was just in the first moments of the afterglow — the stillest time of the day. A quiet joy seemed, to the old doctor, to suffuse the girl's face. His professional observation did not miss the signs of fading vision in her eyes, but as she smiled up at him, the doctor said,

"Child, you are growing positively beautiful!".

Mandy laughed, and then she said, soberly: "It was right — what you said — about seeing lots of things in six weeks, you know."

The doctor smiled, and then clucked to his old horse, a little abruptly, and drove on. He did not want the girl to see the tears that gathered unreasonably in his foolish old eyes.

So Autumn passed on soaring wings of beauty. Almost in a night, at the lightest touch of frost's fingers, Mandy's green trees stood transformed; and as she checked off the days on the calendar in her room the subtle chemistry of Nature that was slowly killing the nerves that lay behind her eyes was also taking the life of the leaves, but turning them to glory before they died. And Mandy's vision, too, was being painted with gorgeousness and grandeur before her sight was to fade.

She stood one day on the summit of the bluff near her rock quarry, and looked over miles and miles of country. Here and there in open spaces between woodlands were fields of yellow, brown and green, laid off with almost the exactness of a checker-board. Here and there she caught the shining silver glint of the winding creek. But the woodlands! Maroon and gold they were, with here and there flaming crimson. Dull patches of brown covered some little knolls where the frost had bitten hard and early, and sometimes a color like ashes was discernible — appropriate symbol! No shade of yellow to brown but was to be seen in those seas of color.

One morning as she lay under favorite hard-maple trees by the creek-side, half in shade and half in sun, a sudden gust of wind brought a swirling avalanche of dead leaves down upon her, half covering her. Mandy shivered, for the wind was chilly, and a shadow seemed to pass over her eyes.

Thenceforward the shadows multiplied as the days passed, until when the time came that the first flurry of snow whitened the world, she seemed to be walking in a haze.

But it was not like going blind to Mandy Simmons. She knew just how the snow must look lodged in the branches of the evergreen trees in their little cluttered-up front yard, now released from littleness and spiritualized by its snow mantle.

She knew just how the denuded branches of her wonderful trees that topped the old quarry bluff must look, all clothed in snow-white. Her physical eyes were no longer needed to paint for her the beauties and wonders of Nature, so Nature quietly cut the cords of vision.

One evening in early winter, Dr. Snowden drove into the Simmons yard. He did not come on professional business, but only to satisfy his curiosity as to how that girl of Jim Simmons' was getting along. He had heard, with the rest of the country-side, that she was now entirely blind, and his interest, as a practical psychologist, and also (this he did not admit to himself) as a man of tender sympathy, was enlisted. He stopped near the house and climbed stiffly out of the buggy, letting his horse stand unhitched. The wind swept bleakly down the valley, and the old doctor hurried his steps toward the barnyard. He knew where he was apt to find the Simmonses at this time of day.

Leaning on the heavy gate to the cow-yard, the doctor saw two figures. One was the slender figure of Mandy, wrapped in a great shawl, the ends of which were flying in the wind. The other was the heavy, powerful form of her father, in ragged coat and overalls. They stood with their backs to the doctor, and they seemed to be looking off into a singularly beautiful sunset. Lakes of crimson and rivers of gold, splashed half-way around the world, flooded the sky. The wind, abating its vigor a little, brought their words to the doctor's ears.

"Now it's changing — off to the north here — from lavender to pink —" Jim was saying.

"Oh, I know!" interrupted the girl, eagerly. "A long streamer of cloud, aint it? And up above it, they's cloud-shapes, aint they?"

"Yes, that's right, Mandy," replied her father. "One is shaped like an elephant at the circus — trunk and all —"

Dr. Snowden turned away abruptly. He had seen enough. As he tramped back to his buggy, muttering into his beard, he almost ran into Mrs. Simmons, shouldering against the wind, a milk-pail in each hand.

"Hello!" he shouted. "Pretty blustery weather!"

"Why, howdy-do, Doc! It is some windy.—Look, Doc, don't it look wild over there on the north hill with them bare ellum trees blowin' in the wind in front of that pink sky!"

"Why, yes, now that you speak of it, it does," replied old Dr. Snowden. He hesitated a moment, and then said slowly: "So Mandy is entirely blind now?"

Mrs. Simmons answered quickly and very cheerfully.

"Oh, Mandy claims she ain't blind a mite," she exclaimed. "She had six weeks, you know, to see—"

"And now you help her to see things, I s'pose—"

"Oh, no, Doc; it's her that helps us to see things. It does beat all, Doc, how many things—"

A gust of wind carried her words away from the doctor, who turned and climbed stiffly into his rickety old buggy. He raised his arm in a good-bye salute to Mrs. Simmons, and then rattled briskly away into the wind and the gathering darkness.

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# SONG-FLAME

By AMY SHERMAN BRIDGMAN

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Miss Bridgman has already reached a large public through her "Hymn of Mourning" which is, as yet, the only adequate vocal interpretation of our great, and ever-increasingly great, national grief.

In this volume, therefore, it is not surprising to find, in unusual degree, the power to understand and enter into the feelings of common humanity, and, both in matter and manner, the achievement is far beyond the ordinary.

Miss Bridgman has experimented with many forms and meters, and one is strongly impressed by the poetic vigor everywhere displayed.

Her free verse is spirited, clear and appealing, her sonnets well-chiseled, and her short lyrics often of flawless beauty. Her wide range of subjects is indicated not only by the lines which, as preface, she borrows from Mr. Wheelock, but by the sub-titles: *Dramatic Moments; Earth, Sea and Sky; Here and There; War, 1914-1918; Leaping Flames.*

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*AN INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE*

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# THE STRATFORD JOURNAL

SEPTEMBER, NINETEEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTEEN

*The single fixed policy of the Stratford Journal is to endeavor to print the best in foreign and native literature. It is allied to no fad or cult and committed to no 'ology' or 'ism'. It welcomes the work of new writers particularly.*

## A Lithuanian Village

BY LEON KOBRIN

Authorized Translation from the Yiddish by Isaac Goldberg

This extract, complete in itself, from Kobrin's charming masterpiece of color and atmosphere, introduces to readers of THE STRATFORD JOURNAL one of the chief Yiddish authors. Of the man's entire work more will be said in a later issue. Kobrin is the author of about thirty plays, several volumes of short tales and a number of novels. "A Lithuanian Village" is one of his latest works, and for sheer charm of mood, manner and magic of evocation has few parallels in any tongue. Particularly striking is the end of the work, where the entire village dwindles away through the emigration of the younger generation to America.—Ed.

### I

#### THE VILLAGE OF B—

SOMEWHERE in Lithuania there once nestled the little village of B—. It boasted a population of several hundred Jewish souls and a score or more of Gentile peasants; it had a market and shops; an old, gloomy Polish church in the middle of the market-place; a Jewish apothecary who would have been reckoned by his fellow Jews as a Gentile, only that he appeared in the synagogue at New Year's services and upon the Day of Atonement; a Jewish teacher with an excellent handwriting, who taught all the flourishes of calligraphy, in both Yiddish and Russian, to the boys and girls of the community, at twenty-five kopeks per month; a Rabbi, or as he was there called, a dispenser of justice; a couple of slaughterers; a money-lender; a pair of cantors; a public bath and several synagogues, begging pardon for mentioning the profane and the sacred in the same breath. In addition there was a Gentile police-sergeant,—a veritable emperor in his domains.

All the village Jews were "business people," and made their living by dealing with the peasants of their own village and the surrounding communities. In truth, theirs was a poor existence, but illuminated by a great faith in God, and just such a life as their forebears had lived. They asked no greater favor of the Lord than that their police-sergeant should have a soft heart and a willing palm. . . . And the Lord ever showed himself indeed prodigal with his mercy, and never withheld his bounty from the Jews of B——, sending them always sergeants with soft hearts. And the Jews gladly crossed his palm and praised and thanked their Father for His favors. So that theirs was a happy existence! . . . They ate bread and groats, sometimes with milk and sometimes without. That was for week-days. For the Sabbath and the holidays the good Lord betimes sent a fish or two and a piece of meat.

Nor were the wives of these Jews barren women. The male population was much at home, so that children were not lacking, and there was always some celebration or other in honor of a newly born son. They sent their sons to Hebrew school and to Old Frankish instructors, where they received a small portion of the Holy Law and a great deal of spanking. Having finished Hebrew school the sons would either open a place on the market or else go off to try their fortune in a nearby town.

As to the girls, they were kept at home until they were married. Unless, if one were particularly ill-favored, she would be sent to a large city, to a dressmaker, there to learn the trade, or be placed as a domestic servant.

On the whole, however, the Jews of B—— lived content, knowing that there was a God in heaven who had provided for their fathers and grandfathers before them, who provided for the world, and who would surely not forsake them, either.

And when one of the Jews was marrying off a daughter the Lord came to his aid, sending him all he needed for the purpose, through a promissory note, a loan from the money-lender, or at times through a pure miracle. In short, no one could need or wish for a life more peaceful and content.

This peaceful contentment was disturbed only when a new sergeant was appointed to the district. At such times a terror fell upon the Jews of B——. Suddenly they would dwindle in stature, bend their backs, walk shrinkingly along, looking about them with fright in their eyes, just like pursued animals. Until the sergeant showed his soft heart... Whereupon they would again breathe freely, straighten their backs and resume their life of peaceful contentment, their hearts filled anew with an abiding faith. . . .

This quiet was disturbed also when anybody in the village died. The whole population would turn out for the funeral,—relatives and strangers, friend and foe,—and the air would ring with the moaning and lamentation of the women. Even greater was the lamentation in the village when the local youths were summoned to the military examination. At such times the mothers would run to the cemetery and beat upon the graves of their departed, begging the dead with cries of despair to save their sons. Frightful wailing echoed through the streets, in the synagogues and in the homes. . . .

Many of the sons were unfit, with scabby heads, or were captured, lame, twisted, crippled, consumptive; these were termed defectives and emerged with white tickets,—exempt.

Those young men, however, who were sound and sturdy, and who were taken into the service, were looked upon, at their return to the village after their term had expired, as even more defective than the exempted weaklings. The local mothers, indeed, were far more willing to give their daughters in marriage to a lame young man than to a robust youth who had been a soldier. For it seemed, somehow or other, that the youth had lost his Jewish character in the service; he returned from the barracks a different person entirely; he walked differently, talked differently, and looked altogether different from the usual young man of the community. . . . To make matters worse, they used to return from the army dissipated and wanton, and it had happened more than once that a soldier had led a respectable daughter astray. One of the girls had been forced to flee from the village.

Sometimes,—but rarely,—it happened that the routine

of the village was disturbed by something of a totally different nature; as, for example, a dispute among the Jews over the merits of the Rabbi,—over a slaughterer, over a cantor's voice, over the public bath, or over the matter of precedence in being called up to the altar to read from the Bible. . . . A dispute of this sort naturally did not last long; after the right and the wrong side had slapped each other's faces in warm fashion,—after a couple of minyans of countenances had been well scratched and a score or more fingers had almost been bitten off, the weaker side thrust a few rubles into the sergeant's fist. And once that potentate had delivered his judgment, there was not a Jew in B—— who dared question the decision.

II  
SUMMER

In summer the village was bedecked with green. . . . It lay in a valley: on the one side at the foot of a dark forest, which looked down upon it with most mysterious mien from a hilly eminence; on the other, at the bottom of an old Polish cemetery which was situated on a green hillock, with its gaunt tombstones and costly monuments, beneath which reposed the Polish lords of long ago. . . . The burial-ground looked down upon the village with a mien even more mysterious than that of the forest on the other side. . . . The sky above the village was clear; at times a deep blue, like a calm sea, and at others girdled with red bands. When the sun set, certain windows seemed to glow with a red flame, while others sank into gloom. When the sun rose, the woods seemed to catch fire; the cross on the Polish church in the market-place glittered; the tombstones and the monuments of the Polish cemetery shone as if they were spattered with gold, and waves of warmth and light streamed over the village. . . . And when the moon rose over the dark forest, the tree-tops were spangled with a sparkling dust, and the whole hamlet,—its market, its roofs, its church and its cemetery,—seemed to be covered with a shimmering powder. . . .

Summer brought lively times to the village. Upon the

broad, dusty, unpaved streets the Jewish children ran about in play,—boys and girls together, barefoot, with dirty faces, some with fat little bellies under their long, four-cornered, fringed scarf or under their soiled skirts. The urchins, with their exposed shirt-tails flapping about, scampered around like frisky calves, fought with each other, wept from childhood blows, or played for buttons. The girls sat in the sand or on the green mounds of turf before the houses, casting their dice made from the bones of animals. The older boys were at Hebrew school, and from the open windows of the *kheder* came shrill, piping voices, in a sing-song together with the Rabbi, droning the words of their primers or their Bibles. . . . The mothers,—those who were not dragged into town during the week together with their husbands, sat upon the turf-mounds, mending and sewing, darning socks upon a glass, or embroidering table-cloths. Or again, others,—the business women,—stood in their little booth-shops, or upon the market-place near a table laden with bread, various tid-bits at a *groschen* apiece, and *kvass*. The fathers, those that had no occupation, sat near their wives in the stalls, kept a sharp eye for customers, and sighed; others were in the synagogues discussing “politics.” . . . The grown-up Jewish daughters, who performed the household duties, went about in slatternly fashion, with tattered skirts, many of them with their shoes upon bare feet, and others with feathers from the bedding in their hair. . . . If a young man should pass by, there would appear at one of the windows a head of dishevelled hair and a pair of black, fiery eyes. If the black eyes encountered those of the young man, they would withdraw bashfully, and a hand suddenly hastened to arrange the disordered hair. And when the young man had disappeared, through the open window there would come wafting a song in which a maiden’s soul poured forth its hidden longing.

### III

#### A SUMMER SABBATH

The selfsame maidens, however, looked altogether different on Sabbath eve, at the blessing of the candles, when their

fathers returned from the public bath with wet temple-locks and dripping beards, their faces red and steamy. Their mothers had closed the shops on the market-place. When the young ladies had tidied up the home, ready for the Holy Sabbath,—had stored the evening meal away at the back of the oven,—had hidden the Sabbath soup under a pillow to keep it warm, had sprinkled the floor with a golden sand, decked the table with a white cloth, and set upon one end of the table a pair of shining candlesticks with the candles in their places, and at the other end two loaves of home-made white bread under a white towel, and had lighted the lamps,—then, too, the maidens cast off the week-day spirit from themselves as well. Their faces were washed; their eyes sparkled more freely, and into the braids of their combed hair were woven gaily-colored ribbons; in their starched dresses many of them looked as if they were indeed possessed of a new soul,—the soul of the Day of Rest.

The sun goes down. Some of the windows flare up with a fiery red, and others are darkened by gloomy shadows. The forest and the Polish cemetery seem moodier than ever. . . .

In the Jewish homes the women are reciting the blessing of the candles. After this prayer, while the parents and brothers of the girls are still at the synagogue, the maidens appear upon the street, stand about their houses, chat with their companions or play with a small brother or sister. . . . Their bearing and even their gait is different, and if a young man acquaintance passes by, they look at him more boldly, and their voices ring more freely, louder than ever. . . .

For they are in their Sabbath, holiday mood; they feel it, and they look it. The entire landscape has assumed a Sabbatical air. . . . All the houses are illumined, and through the windows may be seen the bright, cheery beams of the candles, which seem to escape into the street and engage in combat with the dark shadows that the summer evening casts over the village. The thicker and darker the shadows become as they spread over the hamlet, the more strongly and brightly shine the beams of the Sabbath lights through the windows of the

Jewish homes, and the more cheerful and exalted are the eyes of the Queen of the Sabbath that gazes through the windows.

Over the market-place, too, hovers the Holy Sabbath. Everything is so quiet, so peaceful. The shops are closed,—the tables removed. No careworn Jewish face is visible, nor can a Jewish groan be heard. Quiet and peace. The market-place is asleep, resting from its week-day cares. The hens of the Gentile peasants, and their brood, the Gentile geese and ducks, who were pecking all day about the shops and tables, left the place before nightfall. Only "Jewish" goats wander now among the closed stalls; nobody drives them away, so that they, too, feel the spirit of the Sabbath and strut about calmly, undisturbed, free; and when the desire moves them, they stop short before a shop and peacefully rub their beards against the door. . . .

Night has fallen. The forest and the Polish cemetery seem to have receded from the village into a deep darkness. . . . Stars have been lighted in the sky. They, too, sparkle differently than on week-day nights. Jews come forth from the synagogue. They walk along at ease, their wives and sons at their sides,—one with his coat slung across his shoulders, another with both hands thrust into his sleeves, a third with his hands folded behind his back. Step by step, ever so leisurely, they walk along, as nonchalantly as if there were no cares upon earth. . . .

"Good Sabbath!" echoes the street with cheery voices. "Good Sabbath!" echoes in the houses.

"Good Sabbath!" whisper the little candle beams through the windows, it seems, to the twinkling stars in the heavens. "Good evening!" . . .

And soon every Jew has welcomed to his home the benevolent spirits of the Holy Sabbath. The wife softly hums the chant of the prayers as her husband intones them, and the pious daughter hums it, too. And the raisin-wine, or the sweet mead, poured from the Sabbath beaker and tasted by everybody in the house, contains every flavor. . . . And later, when the head of the house sings the Sabbath songs, his voice sounds so free, and his sons join him, and the wife and

daughter chime in, too, humming softly or accompanying the melody in their thoughts. . . . All sorrows would be forgotten when the Sabbath came to the village. The Jewish street, the Jewish home, the Jewish soul,—all rested when Sabbath came.

The day was particularly eventful for the girls, since every Saturday they went walking in the woods. They walked in pairs, and reaching the forest would sit down upon the green carpet in the shade of the trees. Through the trees would come a noise of young men acquaintances, playing there at “butter-tarts.” Older men and women, who had come thither on a walk, would sit on the grass, facing the young men and laughing at their antics. The girls would begin to sing a Jewish folk-song, whereupon the young men grew silent, soon appearing from behind the trees, looking upon the maidens and smiling foolishly. . . . The girls would turn their eyes away, arrange their hair more becomingly, glance down upon their bosoms, pluck the grass aimlessly and sing, sing. . . .

All at once one of the young men takes up the tune,—then a second, and a third, and soon all in chorus, and the voices of the girls and the youths blend, intertwine, caress and kiss. . . . The older folk join in the tune with a nasal humming, and the blue sky over the dark crowns of the trees seems to sing with them. . . . There is an odor of dried hay mingled somewhat with that of grease, for deep in the forest there is a grease factory. A Gentile of the neighborhood, who works at the factory, appears amongst the trees, stops, and looks on, while a broad smile plays over his features. He listens to the singing, thrusts his black, shining shocks of hair under his cap, scratches the nape of his neck, and laughs heartily, showing his white teeth. Then he turns to a girl who looks healthier and sturdier than even he, and cries “Ah! You sing well, *Kheike!*” And he gives her a pinch in the breast. Whereupon a shrieking laughter bursts forth among the girls, who scatter like geese. The older folk commence to scold the impudent rascal.

“You ought to shame yourself!”

The young men look upon the factory hand with a sort of

envy, and smile in confusion. The Gentile youth explodes into a roar of deafening laughter and continues on his way. There is no more singing, however. The girls gather more closely together, and whisper secrets among themselves, bashfully; they strike their shoulders against their companions, pinch one another, stifle with laughter, laugh aloud, scream and glance furtively in the direction of the young men. The young men return the glances, gazing especially at robust Kheike, who screams louder than the rest. The young men's laughter becomes now more spirited, more nervous, and suddenly they begin to wrestle with one another, throw each other to the ground, roll over the grass, exhibit all their tricks, walk on their hands, stand on their heads and bark like dogs. . . . The girls continue to laugh and scream louder and more shrilly than ever, and the forest echoes their cries... Thus it continues till the evening meal. Then the groups break up and go homeward.

They cross the market-place in pairs, in threes, and even in fours; boys and girls separately, and both the youths and the maidens are still under the spell of the forest. During all the way home the sides send signals,—the girls to the boys, the boys to the girls, letting themselves be heard or their presence felt, casting glances, making grimaces, uttering sudden screams, shrieks, bursting into laughter and dashing about. . . .

If the maidens meet a familiar Gentile boy they greet him so freely, so unrestrainedly; they smile to him, jest with him; and if he stops to chat with them, one of the girls pulls his coat-tails, another his sleeve, a third slaps him across the shoulder, and all of them smile at him and are ready to play with him..... The freedom which the Jewish daughter displays toward the Gentile youth has not been revealed in her bearing toward the Jewish young man.

At such times, when the Jewish young men meet a familiar, barefoot Gentile peasant-girl, they jest with her: "Who gave you the bloody nose?" they ask. Whereupon she feels her nose with her rough fingers for signs of blood, then laughs and exclaims good-naturedly, "May the wolves devour you!"

And should they permit themselves greater freedom with her, she answers with a slap over the hands and loud laughter.....

The market-place is still at rest; the shops are still closed, as the Jewish boys and girls come home from the woods with their noisy chatter. The doors of the old, gloomy Polish church are already open; they are preparing for their worship. A few peasants of either sex, in their white smocks and their bast shoes, have arrived early from the neighboring hamlets; they sit on the ground near the church, waiting. The men smoke their pipes and spit out in silence. The women, their heads covered by kerchiefs of plain white or of flowery designs, converse in soft tones, as if telling secrets. . . . Hearing the loud laughter of the familiar Jewish youths and maidens, they look up and greet them dumbly with a nod. The passing girls reply to the greeting with friendly smiles, adding "Good evening! Good evening!"

Behind the church, storks are hopping about on their long legs. From an open window yonder peers out a Jew in a skull-cap, covered with feathers from the bed from which he has very evidently just arisen. He strokes his beard in leisurely fashion, yawns in the same carefree manner and wrinkles his forehead. Another Jew with a yellow matted beard, wearing a winter coat from beneath which may be seen the yellow, grimy edges of his fringed scarf, is standing at the gate to his home, scratching himself with his left hand under his right arm-pit, making grimaces and complaining: "Ay-va! Such hot weather! Good heavens!" A Jewish woman in her Sabbath bonnet runs out of the house and shouts to her unwilling son to come right in and do his reading from the *Dicta of the Fathers*. And there sits a mother with her children on a turf-mound, telling them tales about ghosts and spirits, about miracle-workers and the thirty-six saints. An elderly man with his coat-tails gathered up is chasing a goat and calling to it. "Zhig! Zhig! Zhig!" Another is driving away from his gate a pig which has smelled something there and is rooting it up with his snout. The man waves his hands at the animal, stamps his feet, seizes a missile from the ground and shouts, "Off with you! Off with you!"

Here and there a goat is lying upon one of the turf-mounds, scratching his beard and his back, raising his head and beginning to chew something. Across a high fence a cat is making its way, humping its long back, curling its tail, shaking its light, transparent ears, rubbing its white whiskers against its paws and rolling its yellow eyes. Two elders come by, obviously engrossed in a deep problem. Both walk slowly, their beards clutched in their fists, their foreheads furrowed in thought. Perhaps they are discussing "politics,"—Bismarck and Beaconsfield; or perhaps some knotty problem in the Gemara, altogether. . . .

A young Jewish mother, in her Sabbath clothes, rests upon a mound with an infant in her arms, dancing it up and down, singing and laughing to it in the utmost glee. Small children with washed faces and combed hair are playing before their houses. The shirt-tails that stick out from the urchins' trousers are still white and clean; the little girls' dresses have not yet had time to be soiled. . . .

As soon as the children spy their elder brothers and sisters returning from their stroll, they dash toward them with a glad shout, surround them and press close to their knees. The faces of the older brothers and sisters shine with a certain zest, and are covered with perspiration; their eyes, however, glow happily. And the father, seeing this, scolds his son.

"The idea of such a husky chap running about all day long. Better stay home and do your Sabbath studying in the *Dicta of the Fathers!*"

The mother looks at her boy and sighs. "How ruddy, how healthy! He'll surely be taken as one of the Czar's soldiers!" . . .

And to her daughter, at such times, the mother exclaims, "You're a regular Gentile peasant-girl! See how sweating you are! You must have been raising Cain!"

And the father, naturally in harsh accents: "She ought to be thoroughly spanked,—the wanton,—so that she'll remember!" . . .

But no sooner has the daughter,—"the wanton,"—"the Gentile peasant-girl"—turned away, than her parents, natur-

ally, glow with pride and tell each other, "What a beauty! May no evil eye gaze upon her! What a beauty! She shines like seven suns!" . . .

The sun sinks lower in the west. Soon it will set. The village gathers in the synagogue to say the sunset prayer. The daughter remains at home, puts an apron on over her Sabbath dress, and prepares the table for the closing Sabbath meal. She prepares the table and dreams her maiden's dream. . . . The dream peeps out through her eyes, blushes across her cheeks, hovers over her lips. . . . She beholds a youth, running about in the forest with fiery speed, wrestling with his companion, and displaying superhuman strength,—such strength!" . . .

And the youth, who has gone to the synagogue, thinks also of the forest, of the maidens, and dreams of their faces, of their eyes, their singing and their laughter. . . .

And now the men have returned home from the sunset prayer. All sit around the table and eat the closing meal of the Sabbath. The father begins to sing from the Sabbath songs. The sun has set. Suddenly there resounds over the village a metallic ringing,—Ding, Dong!—that trembles through the air in a long monotone. . . . The Sabbath Spirit of Rest among the Jews gives a shudder, and a melancholy yearning descends upon them. . . .

The bell of the church begins to ring, and reverberates through the village with its alternate long and short tones: Ding, Dong! Ding, Dong!

And its solemn, metallic notes mingle with the deepening shadows that night scatters through the village, and the tones penetrate into the Jewish homes, into the Jewish souls, and rouse within them an even greater melancholy, a greater yearning,—their week-day cares. . . .

The Jewish father begins to sigh; the mother looks worried anew; the sons are distraught; the daughters are sad. . . .

Later the men return to the synagogue to say the evening prayers. All the Jewish homes are dark; the Jewish daughters cast off their Sabbath finery, remove the colored ribbons from their hair and sigh into the darkness. The church bell

booms again, and how mournfully its tones vibrate through the gloom,—with what soulful melancholy they echo in the dark Jewish homes out of which the Holy Sabbath has departed. . . .

The stars have begun to twinkle in the sky. But they do not sparkle as joyfully as they did on Sabbath eve.....

In the windows of the Jewish homes lonely little lights have begun to appear. Voices are heard upon the street. "Good week to you! Good week!" The voices, however, echo with cares. . . . And soon from every house arise the prayers that end the Sabbath and call upon the Lord's blessing for the coming week. A few moments later may be heard the hoarse rattling of keys on the market-place, where the Jewish men and women are opening their shops. Here and there sounds a Jewish groan . . . Sabbath is over. The Spirit of Rest has departed. The week-day soul alone remains. Care has awakened,—care and worries. . . . Sabbath is over! . . .

## Poetry

### AMERICA SPEAKING

BY ALICE M. FAY

I am an Idea;  
True, my borders embrace  
Broad plains,  
Fields of waving wheat, where the poppy blooms, the grass-  
hopper chirps, and the tall sunflower lifts her glowing  
face to the God of Day,  
Quiet farms,  
Wild deserts, where grow the cactus and the prickly pear,  
and where, in the Great Silence and the Golden After-  
glow, is sensed the Land Beyond.  
Precipitous mountains that rear their hoary heads far  
up into the Blue Vault of Heaven, teaching mortals to  
hope and to aspire,  
Placid lakes and laughing streams,  
Mighty rivers that flow ever on and on restlessly until  
they meet and lose their being in the mightier sea,  
Great cities that throb with life,  
Sombre forests,  
And the smiling tropics;  
True, my borders embrace all these fair gifts to Man,  
But, first and foremost, I am an Idea:  
I am Freedom,—  
Plymouth and Concord gave me to the world;  
I am Democracy,—  
For I offer Equality and Opportunity to the Children of  
Earth;  
I am the New Christianity,—  
The Spirit rather than the Form of the creed;  
I am Freedom, I am Democracy, I am the New Christianity,  
I am an Idea,  
I am Man's Belief In Man.

WITH QUEENS

BY LOUISE BOGAN

Since morning  
I have walked with queens,  
Young queens, whose great story-to-be  
Lies like a dusk in their eyes and a shadow in their hair.

With Helen  
Newly wedded to her lord  
I have freshened my house  
Gayly, like Helen  
I have sat in a sunny doorway  
Hemming the creamy linen.

With Nausicaa  
I have rubbed the clothes to whiteness in the shining water;  
And Deirdre has been beside me  
When I swept the threshold,  
When I stirred the pot of golden broth upon the fire,  
That all should be ready  
Against his coming.

All day I have walked with queens  
Their gayety upon me,  
Until now when they are with me no longer  
I lie awake  
Watching with tired eyes  
Deep on deep of darkness,—  
As once Andromache, beside her lord,  
Watched, and saw the half-grown moon  
Uncertainly shine, like a broken circle of love,  
In the night,  
In the heavy night,  
Sombre and presageful.

SUNSET AT AMADOR

BY LOUISE BOGAN

Beyond Perico,  
And Naos  
And all the islands to the east,  
The blue darkness floods along the evening,  
From cloud to cloud cascades.  
From terrace to terrace, evenly, quietly,  
Gently the light steps down.

Hills all along the sky  
Hold the sunset behind them  
Like a fire in their thickets.  
A slight air turns in the leaves of the papaya tree  
And clashes in the leaves of the palm  
Stars bright as brook water stream into the sky.  
There is coolness suddenly.

I shall close my eyes against the west  
Where the last red flame  
Drops down like a broken hibiscus flower.  
I shall remember my land :  
A road lost against a sky the color of hepaticas ;  
A hill where always grass and flowers  
Lie closest to the wind.

TO THE MARTYRED POET, JUAN DIAZ COVARRUBIAS

BY MANUEL ACUNA

TRANSLATED FROM THE SPANISH BY ALICE STONE BLACKWELL

Within the tomb where hovers dim  
Thy shade, august and dear,  
Now rests the lyre of thy pure soul ;  
Broken it slumbers here.  
No lay of country or of love  
Forth from its cords rings clear.

But, 'mid the grief that sighs and weeps  
    Around thy place of rest,  
Friend, thy grand silence is in truth  
    Of all thy songs the best.

It sounds when love of fatherland  
    Smites the harp's echoing strings ;  
Thy silence is the self-same thing  
    As Liberty that sings.  
Thou, in that holy conflict stern  
    Between the right and wrong,  
Mourning each movement of retreat,  
    Didst fall, in battle strong ;  
Then o'er the poet's lifeless corpse  
    Rose Progress, with a song !

A monster who has left the world  
    A fierce and dreadful name —  
He who at Tacubaya climbed  
    To history's height of shame —  
To make his triumph more secure  
    Put out thy life's bright flame.  
There he mistook ; for he forgot,  
    In cruelty and dread,  
That lips alive and singing speak  
    Less loudly than the dead.

If it was thy desire to rise  
    Unto the Infinite,  
And leave thy name forevermore  
    Upon the future writ,  
Well mayst thou sleep in peace today !  
    Thy fate hath compassed it.  
Musing on thee, thy native land  
    With pride and sorrow saith  
That, if thy life was beautiful,  
    More beautiful thy death !

AMERICA IN THE WAR

By HENRY FRANK

(Author of "The Clash of Thrones.")

From the far heights of halcyon peace, where trust  
In thy secure aloofness stilled the fears,  
Thou witnessed, once, the woe and desperate tears  
Of nations, stung with mortal wounds and lust  
Of blood-thirst hate; nor felt thou must  
Endanger thy safe shores, even with cheers  
For struggling standards, that avouched their trust  
In powers, would crush a maniac's conquering spears.

But hark! The air now quivers with the shrieks  
Of yon distracted eagle in the skies,  
That hath beheld, from his far-seeing peaks,  
The venom'd work of dupes and treacherous spies.  
Awake! Thy shores of safety now are shorn,  
For Death, his burning brands hath hither borne.

# In Defence of the Little Theatre

BY COLIN CLEMENTS

THE little theatre movement has been cynically called a “fad” or “something new under the sun.” But it is not a fad, it is not new. It was the little theatre with its groups of hard-working and keen-minded men who first removed the drama as an expression of life from the narrowing influence of a domineering church and allowed it to grow as an art.

The theatre of the English-speaking world today is the logical result of 17th century moral and aesthetic shortsightedness. In 1642, when the London Puritan succeeded in closing the playhouses in the city limits and over on the Bankside, quite unintentionally he discarded from the necessities of man’s social and educational development an institution which speedily lapsed into a strictly commercial enterprise, conducted specifically and without mercy for private gain.

The modern manager, profiting from staleness and vulgarity, is too apt to plead that he is merely satisfying public demand. As a matter of historical fact, however, trashy musical comedy and tiresome sex play (aptly described by Mr. Bliss Perry as erotic, neurotic and tommyrotic) are not the product of public opinion, but rather the normal consequence of corrupting the theatre, originally a thoroughly wholesome, national institution, into an amusement device for an unthinking populace. That the American stage is far from what it should be, no intelligent person doubts. During the last decade, however, an improvement has begun, due very largely to a unique development in our most characteristic social mechanism, our educational system.

And now again more than ever before in its history, the theatre as a place for art is attracting the attention and the study of those whose abilities thus directed are telling for the ultimate success of a cause which for so many centuries

has struggled for freedom. In the Middle Ages, this same desire for expression was alertly present. The drawing together of spirits, congenial because of common ideals, is evidenced in the guilds, in the fraternities of actors who, at first in the church and later without the church, sought to present to their audiences that which would not only amuse, but also instruct. We have record of many of these companies: The Scholars of St. Paul's school, famed for their remarkable performances of *Miracle* plays (14th century plays founded on the Old and New Testament); The Confraternity of the Holy Trinity founded in honor of the Body of Christ, with the object of maintaining a luminary of thirteen wax candles, arranged around the sepulchre set up in the church at the time of the Feast of Easter; the "Jugglers" in France, who travelled through the country giving public performances along with those of the trade guilds; The Fraternity of St. Crispin, consisting of shoemakers, who once a year on October 25th walked to *Notre Dame*, preceded by the baton of their saint and the arms of the corporation, to perform there the *Mystery* of their patron.

One of the most famous of these groups banded themselves together at the close of the 14th century and in 1402 obtained letters patent from Charles VII which conferred on them all the privileges of a corporation under the name of Confraternity of the Passion. They hired a hall in Paris (*Hôpital de la Trinité*) and converted it into a permanent theatre. Here they gave *Passion Plays* on Sundays and secular plays on week days.

The famous *Passion Plays* of Paris were inaugurated by this company. Their theater was of a size which would accommodate 150 to 200 people. The stage was at one end, separated from the pit by a barrier and benches behind which stood the spectators. The actors seated themselves, when not playing, upon the benches at either side of the stage in full view of their audience. The plays were of a length that would take probably an hour or an hour and a half to produce.

The Confraternity is reputed to have conformed for a considerable period to its original part, though naturally in-

clined toward the more profane of the plays at its disposal, and led possibly very much by the taste of its audiences. The drama had grown very gradually but very surely away from the church until it had become quite definitely secularized. Indeed by the end of the 12th century, the clergy had lost a great part of their influence over these performances. The church, becoming alarmed at the increasing popularity of secular drama, caused the privileges of this company to be revoked in 1542 and speaks disparagingly of "these unlettered people, of no understanding in such matters, of the lowest condition, such as carpenters, locksmiths, fishmongers, etc., who have played 'the Acts of the Apostles' adding thereto various Apocryphal things. Both the managers and the players are ignorant men, not knowing A from B, who were never instructed nor trained for the stage." Six years later, parliament renewed the privilege of the corporation but gave them authority to produce plays of lawful and proper subjects, but not religious mysteries.

There were two other companies existing at this same time, one of the society of the Bazoche, and another the Devil-may-cares (*Enfans San Souci*) which, with the simplest stage accessories, presented farces and short comic plays with allegorical figures. The rivalry of these companies with The Confraternity of the Passion has been likened in some measure to that existing between the company of Molière, more than a century later, and the cultivators of the severer style at the Hôtel de Bourgogne.

It is of more than passing interest to contemplate these various groups of actors with their little theatres, who brought drama to the very threshold of the Renaissance, having struggled and fought for the preservation of its traditions and for its development, since in our own time similar struggles are taking place in behalf of the play world and its work. "As," says Galsworthy, "we are in the midst of a new Renaissance, development is possible only under conditions of freedom and the commercial theatre has not been the cradle of freedom for which the drama yearned in order to grow."

# The American Tragiphobia

BY LOUISE GEBHARD CANN

## I.

THE American is afflicted with tragiphobia. If you do not believe it, observe the way in which he advertises his books, and the way in which he criticizes such writers as Gorki, Andréiev, Strindberg and Ibsen before they became fads, and poets like John Davidson. He has tragiphobia, but not to the extent of cacotechny. If his taste in art were depraved, it might be extremely interesting; it might even stimulate to fascinating decadent works; but American taste in art is not degenerate—a falling away from a state once ripe; it is puerile, undeveloped, and its affinity is for the commonplace, not for the depraved, the bad, the decadent.

There is a place in Nietzsche's "Ecce Homo" where he expresses the appreciation of tragedy as included in the acceptance of all that is. From him, the American differs remarkably, for nothing is so feared by the latter as what is, in the sense of the all-including—unless it be sugar-coated to the extent of unrecognizability or the elimination of that part of reality,—or appearance, you may use whichever term you prefer,—which is bitterness, morbidity, disaster.

That the American delights in cleverness; that he wishes all expression to correspond to a standard he sets up of agreeableness, which agreeableness he childishly regards as "helpful," is apparent to anyone who takes the trouble to peruse what is put forth in print as American literary criticism. The "agreeableness" which the American critic seems to desire is, one gathers from the observation of his standards, closely akin to optimism; and judging from the samples of the "literatures"—one could not seriously so designate most of the current fiction and poetry produced by the inhabitants of the United States—this optimism which he so craves is not that cosmic optimism of a Nietzsche which declares the virtue of all that is, or the vision of a Goethe which proclaims "Im

Ganzen, Guten, Schönen, Resolut zu leben," which, in other words, is receptive of the entire Dionysian phantasmagoria of good and evil, joy and pain, and exults therein; but it is a restricted optimism, an optimism of savagery which founds itself on taboo, and like all taboo, results from fear and produces fear—the fear of the human soul with its abyss of sorrow, suffering, passion; the fear of the depth and of the height; the fear of tragedy.

This fear of the serious is the bugaboo of the American critic, editor, publisher; and these timid persons, exerting as they do a certain concrete influence on public opinion, have fastened their phobia like an incubus on the American reading public; and the only way in which the intelligent part of the American reading public can squirm out from under the imposed demon is by escaping to Europe or Asia, or by importing European or Asiatic literature.

The result of reading a year's file of four or five of the leading American periodicals is to be convinced that the American intellect is on the one hand academic and narrow, not to say stupid and repetitional, and on the other, insipidly clever and incapable of independent thought or striking invention. The unified impression is that Americans are lacking in artistic realizations and that their souls are either undeveloped or missing. The same may be said, with possibly more exceptions, of the American book output in imaginative writing; and notwithstanding imagism, vorticism, and the rest of the isms now flickering before the public, a contemporary anthology is artistically and intellectually anemic; for the American is revolted by strength in literature. He admits it only as a French, Russian, or Italian exotic. Natively, his fear of strong tragedy or strong comedy so dominates him that as a reader he sits hysterically on a raft on the surface of a pond; and he is so weak that he not only continually cries for help, but he supposes that everyone in existence needs help. And one can imagine him defining his idea of help by the cry, "Preserve us from the knowledge of our souls!" And as a writer, being fundamentally the same, his opinions are like those of a middle-class housewife and club-woman; his

emotions are the gushing sentimentality of the same species of person. These he does up in tinselled packages. The result is that the books he produces, or the periodical reading matter, are far inferior in power, stimulation, emotional compulsion, to kindred work in France and even in England.

II.

After speaking of the obscurity of Hauptmann's "Sunken Bell," of Ibsen's "Master Builder," of the writings of Maeterlinck, Browning, and at the same time calling attention to the fame of these authors, William Lyon Phelps asks in a recent number of *The Yale Review*, apropos of the style of Henry James:

"Do we not often give our highest tribute to the writers who refuse to help us overmuch?"

Prof. Phelps seems to forget the ministry of such works as those cited above to that vague, hungry, inarticulate *Something* within us that craves nourishment. These vague writers of powerful genius make us *feel*, or they answer our feelings. They call to the depth shaking within us, reverberating with a strange, sweet, wild, inexpressible music—not definable, not capturable by words. The emotional infinite is their realm — that profound abyss of inwardness which we suspect is being itself, and which mysteriously in moments of insight forms a bridge, tenuous yet substantial, between our finite, individual selves and the absolute.

The Unknown within us—it is to this that these matters of shadowy, disturbing, soul-penetrating connotations speak; and whosoever has been tortured by the Unknown within him, the hungry, crying gulf, the longing that knows no appeasement, must gratefully acknowledge the "help" (if the idea of help be insisted upon) given by such authors as Browning, Hauptmann, Maeterlinck, Ibsen, in their oracular moments.

And these revelations at first lurid or misty to human vision, later become searchlights dissipating darkness; and those shapes dimly outlined to unaccustomed eyes, that world, incomprehensible and new, evoked by the mighty imaginations of the poets—for in this sense all great writers are poets—

gradually become more and more acutely sensible to aspiring humanity; until, at last, the once intangible world of a seer is a realm conquered and understood. It is these great dreaming ones who push back for us and make space this side the fog-banks of the unknown. "Help" is too temporal a word to apply to such torchbearers.

The sad definiteness of the contemporary American writer speaks merely to the external, the momentary. Instead of leading humanity, he but echoes some trivial phrase caught in the crowd to please the crowd. To the longing depths of man's inner life, he gives no food. Moreover, in his appeal to the mere surface of popular consciousness, he is not even discriminating; he is trite and frivolous, extremely boring to an intellect seeking the subtle and the entertaining; yet, he is a veritable demagogue, for he aims to give the people candy in order to use their taste to his pecuniary service. Instead of being a poet and seer and uttering *ex cathedra* to his own soul the strange imaginings that jostle into forms in his mind, he conducts himself like a curbstone political orator who knows the language of the mob before him, and the weaknesses by which it may be played on, and by the use of that language and the titillation of those weaknesses sways it to his own purpose.

In a recent issue of *Poetry, a Magazine of Verse*, Max Michelson says: "I believe that the art of the future, including poetry, will be simple, fresh, and strongly colored; and will be understood and loved by the ignorant as well as by the most cultivated. It will be a popular art in the finest sense of the word."

This is the typical American attitude. Art must aim at simplicity, freshness, strong color in order to appeal to the people, the ignorant. In other words, art must be degraded to the understanding of the masses; art must be a dancing bear for the entertainment of the crowd! There is no talk in American criticism (save the mark!) of Mahomet's going to the mountain. Always the mountain must come to Mahomet.

And, be it said parenthetically, the ignorant and the cultivated can never unite in their love and understanding of

the same art; for the ignorant never can understand and love the art of the cultivated and the cultivated cannot endure at length the art, so-called, of the people.

Browning, Keats, Shelley, Goethe, Molière, Shakespeare, Marlowe, Dante, Villon, Baudelaire, Verlaine, Verhaeren, Maeterlinck, Ibsen, to mention but a few of the greatest names in creative writing, are none of them "simple, fresh, strongly colored." Most of them are occasionally "simple" or "fresh" or "strongly colored" but of the art of none of them could these epithets be characteristic. Indeed, none of the great masters in any of the arts have been characteristically "simple, fresh, strongly colored." Greatness is usually turgid and vague; its problems are complicated, ceaseless, vast. Genius walks in a light of its own far ahead of the people, and as a rule, its light is so fine in its vibrations that the dull eyes of humanity cannot catch its waves until after generations their eyes have refined to those vibrations.

The characteristic trait of Francis Thompson is hardly simplicity, freshness and strong color.

Little of the most profound thought and feeling can ever be appropriately dressed in garments in which the traits of simplicity, freshness and strong color are combined.

How different from this external aim is that voiced by Maurice Barres in *Echo de Paris* and quoted in an issue of The Egoist: ".....to have the ear of an immense indefinite public, that is, of a desert, while the chief consideration is to go to the extreme limit of one's own thoughts, to oblige oneself to define and perfect oneself even if only followed by a handful of one's peers."

The difference in plastic power of the ideal of self-realization in art and the ideal of freshness, simplicity, strong color for sake of popularity, even admitting the "finest sense of the word" is too obviously in favor of the former to need pointing out.

Popular art is the colored comic cartoon of the newspaper, the melodrama of the "movies," the "best-seller" novel, the sensational song of vaudeville. All such art is simple and strongly colored — the color, in fact, is laid on with a shovel —

but it is not always fresh, for the people do not care for freshness. Such so-called art is contemporary,—will persist, if it survives at all, merely as folk-lore to some curious-minded erudite, who is seeking data concerning, not art, but the customs of a people. Such “art” will be an archeological curiosity when the dark sayings of a Francis Thompson, or of a Hauptmann, will be living in the mouths of the Youth of a generation remote from ours.

The ignorant should be taught that art is a mystery into which they should aspire to enter; but that only through developing understanding and aesthetic responsiveness may they enter this divine temple. That art should go out to meet ignorance is folly. What is man’s civilization, so far as it is civilization, but a fight against ignorance? It is the ignorant who were the Inquisition, who fought the advancement of science, invention, even exploration. The ignorant cannot think for themselves; they are even congenitally antagonistic towards the genuine thought of others; for ignorance, like other conditions, tries to maintain its own existence by hostility to all forces destructive of itself. It is peculiar to the ignorant that they accept the thought of the past, but not the enlightened thought—merely the crystallized opinion, opinion intimately related to their own self-preservation. The ignorant do not think the living thoughts of today; they think automatically the dead thoughts of a thousand yesterdays. Are we then to make our art “simple, fresh, strongly colored” in order to have it understood by the ignorant? And be it remarked, the simplicity of an Ibsen or a Shakespeare cannot be understood by the ignorant; their freshness cannot be appreciated by the ignorant; neither can their strong color. The simplicity, freshness and strong color that will appeal to the ignorant must be of the bill-board variety; it must be dead and blunt before it can be understood by them. As Richard Aldington points out in the *Egoist*, “Any fool can read Shakespeare, but it needs considerable intelligence to appreciate him correctly.” The same writer submits that “the artist is a person whose activities minister to the aesthetic pleasure of certain rather rare intelligences....” and he adds that “Genius is undoubtedly

an anti-social virtue." It is not likely that genius, being so, will produce works that will be popular or that the ignorant can appreciate. In America the "aesthetic pleasure of certain rather rare intelligences" is utterly ignored both by book publishers and by magazine editors. Genius is detested in America; and by publishers and editors it is carefully excluded from so-called American literature. Whitman's fate is an historical instance of the American antipathy to genius; Poe's is almost too hackneyed to mention. The treatment of Hearn during his lifetime is a pertinent illustration of the American attitude towards genius. As Aldington continues most justly in the essay above cited, "The conditions of modern popular art are so degrading that no man of a determined mind can possibly adopt them," and he concludes with a remark that especially applies to the American magazine, "The exploiters at third hand of original ideas are only innovators to secure applause."

Our publishers and editors, being business men and not artists, are concerned with "popularity;" and most of those who write for them have obviously the same concern for the same reason. The concern voiced by Maurice Barres in *Echo de Paris* is never heard on this side the water unless it be imported, or mouthed as a frank insincerity. Yet this concern of self-realization irrespective of the crowd is the only concern that makes for art.

### III.

There is one modern example of a democracy of art, generally speaking; and that is Japan. The Japanese are a nation of artists; they are congenitally poets, painters, designers. They are so in virtue of centuries of intensive training in these arts. Yet even in this race of artists the line between the art of the people and the art of the upper classes has been so sharply drawn that there has been little noticeable interchange between the two. It is a comment on the art-mind of the Occident that it is mainly the vulgar art of the Japanese that has been studied and exploited by the West. And this chiefly in the graphic arts; their poetry, drama, fiction, have hardly been touched by us. This is merely by way of parenthesis. To

return to the main discussion, the Japanese point the way by which art may become pervasive throughout national life: it is not, as the American seems to suppose, by keeping art within the limits of the understanding and the love of the ignorant; nor by turning art into a species of nurse or philanthropist for persons who need "help" of some sort; it is by training the people in the appreciation of art; that is to say, by cultivating in them aesthetic responsiveness. The Japanese understanding of poetry is the very quintessence of the understanding of art itself; but in this country and in England poetry is so far from being a pure art, that the Japanese understanding of it is to most even so-called cultivated minds incomprehensible. The typical Japanese poem, the *Hokku*, is a rhythm; it fulfils itself. It exists neither for the purpose of conveying a definite thought, nor for the purpose of painting a picture; it is a wave, infinitesimal, that upleaps, lisps a fragment of tone, falls on the shore. . . . It is hardly more than a vibration that depends for its perfection on the answering vibration out of the inner being of the one who gathers it. And this is the essence of all art that is creative. Shelley's "Revolt of Islam" is a complex of vibrations that depends on the answering vibrations of the receiver's inner being for intelligibility. Only a being keyed up to the intensity and the clairvoyance of Shelley's can catch the entire complex for understanding and love. That we should expect so extreme sensitiveness from the ignorant and the untrained masses is absurd. Artists should forget the ignorant. The ignorant are unworthy; they are those who refuse to make the fight for self-development. In philanthropy it may be well enough to help the halt, the lame and the blind; but art is for the fit. Art, rightly understood, is not so petty a thing as many contemporary critics would have us believe. It is a force working throughout humanity. It is the force that lifted Gorki from the abyss of the classes into artistic eminence. It is the force that gave us, in spite of laudanum, phthisis and indigence, "The Hound of Heaven" and those other great poems of the Catholic mystic. Those who wish to find their way in this flood must be sufficiently strong to

enter its welter and navigate its tides; those who are too weak to do this are wrecked and stranded on its outermost limits. An individual, a nation, nations, can gain power and depth of understanding through identification with this universal art-force; an individual, a nation, nations, will diminish in essential being by misunderstanding this force; that is, by seeking to limit it. Art must be free to be genuine; it must be free even to be incomprehensible, revolting, monochrome. Art takes no heed of its own attributes. It is a force manifesting itself in life. If we had unbounded trust in the Cosmos we would try to penetrate into art, to partake of its energies; we would never try to dam it up or reject a part of it.

In America we abhor individuality; our effort seems to be to make everybody alike; whereas genius insists upon being itself; that is to say, different. The attitude was rather poignantly expressed once by a leading publisher in New York. He was asked, "Would you have accepted for publication the Ms. of 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles' had its author been unknown to the public?" Gravely he shook his head, "Not if its author were unknown to the public. We'd be very doubtful about the publication of such work, anyhow."

This publisher, without a blush or an apology, admitted that he would not have the courage to bring out a work of genius like "Tess of the D'Urbervilles." His ideas of morality were so perverted that he regarded "Tess" as immoral and his own time-serving, pusillanimous methods as moral. Or, more accurately speaking, he allowed a question of morals to encroach on a question of art, and felt justified in so doing; whereas, he should have known that art has nothing to do with morals, and that a moral consideration should never be brought up in the estimate of a work of art.

It is noticeable that journals that pretend to represent the best in periodical literature in the United States fall far behind similar publications in England in the quality of their editorial opinion. It necessarily follows that most of their contributions are equally commonplace. And even imported contributions from thoughtful foreign writers lose something of their luster in this bourgeois association.

The English accuse themselves of being hopelessly middle-class in aesthetic matters, but they are eminently aristocratic as compared to Americans. Even when the latter bravely start out to be distinguished, they soon grow fatigued and relapse into their normal tone of the middle-class, which is fed on "Success and efficiency" propaganda. The writer who calls to the profound inner being of humanity is not regarded by them as "helpful," possibly, because the American publisher, editor, critic, has as yet evolved no profound inner being; the only writer who is regarded as "helpful" (why an artist should be helpful is a mystery!) is the one who gets out into the middle of the thoroughfare, throws up his cap and yells, "Hurrah for the vulgar, the superficial, the obvious! Hurrah for the blind masses! Down with the man who is ahead of the crowd and apart from it! Away with genius! Give us mediocrity!"

As for the French, it is useless to discuss them in an essay concerning American literary criticism or art; for American literary criticism and art is so far behind French literary criticism and art that the latter cannot be discussed in America without lurid self-consciousness. The profound expressiveness and cosmic individuality—that is, individuality so intense that it becomes universal—of the French creator, will probably never be attained by the English or the American. The few who do attain it will have to commit suicide.

It all comes back to the American's phobia against tragedy. The inhabitants of this our United States are still children afraid of the Vast. They are still trying to pretend that the tiny circle they have drawn around themselves is the Universe, and they are determined that the world is flat and thin. They regard all evidence to the contrary as outlawry, or insanity. And art—especially literary art—is treated by them as the Chinese are said to treat their girl babies.

## In a Moment of Time

BY GEORGE CARVER

RETURNING consciousness found him flat upon his back staring into a waning day. A new star glimmered weakly down from directly above. And yonder to the right, a round, red moon dominated the darkening sky.

An effort to raise his head brought a sickening pain, until by means of arms that felt nothing, that he could barely move, he propped himself up in a half sitting posture.

Straight before him stretched a figure in dirty gray, face toward him. The face caused a stirring of remembrance; somewhere he had seen before a grizzling bristled mustache against a heavily rounded face. Then came the whole affair tumbling into his mind, image after image, all in distinct detail.

He remembered the steel crested sea of gray moving to engulf him; the sharp cries to his right and left; the sudden vomit of machine guns; the refusal of his own to work until at his kick of disgust it began to retch and spew forth its excrescence of steel and fire; its gradual subsidence; the recourse to his revolver; the last shot; the grim mustache against the heavily rounded cheek; and now the returning glimpse of the sky.

He looked around him. Far as he could see through the gathering dark there was quiet, the reaction after tremendous exertion. Shapes of men surrounded him. Here lay one prone, his features sketched in sharp focus by the crepuscular light; a slope of forehead joined the nose to disappear down the escarpment of mouth and chin—shot cleanly away—and merge into the chest line. Three yards to one side sat two bodies leaning back to back, heads on breasts, helmets over eyes; beyond them huddled an indistinguishable mass. On the other side, so close he could have touched them, an arm and two legs strung along in line—no torso within a rod. The world lay desolate and silent except for the yellowing moon and the intermittent firing. The battle tide had ebbed, and

but for the occasional shell hurtling high above him and striking somewhere behind, nothing remained of it save the relics of the men around him.

His legs were powerless when he tried them. He gave up the idea of moving at the return of the sickening pain brought on by the least movement, and fell back and resumed his contemplation of the blackened sky.

Gradually he became aware of footsteps and the sound of quick monosyllables. Raising himself by a gigantic struggle, he made out two stretcher-bearers about twenty yards to the right. On they came, turning over the dead, searching out the living. Another unbelievable effort and he had lifted his arm.

“Sit tight; we’re coming,” called the first stretcher-bearer as they both started to run.

It seemed to him that he woke in the midst of a wilderness of cots, long rows of them on both sides and across, each bearing a shape outlined beneath a sheet. Sudden odors assailed his nose, ammonia, iodoform, and what he thought must be soap; and cool fingers touched his head.

“So you thought you would awake?” sounded a refreshing voice at his ear, and turning slightly he recognized the nurse who had helped him through with the nasty shrapnel wound five months before. “Now we shall see,” she added, brushing his hair away with the cool fingers and scrutinizing closely his eyes.

“Water, please,” he managed. And water had never been so grateful. He drank in great gasps that brought on the pain in his head.

And then the surgeon, a fat jovial soul whom he remembered with a kind of affection, fussed around with him. He tried to say something but was admonished to silence.

For two weeks at least he lay among the cots before all the bandages were removed and the train took him away. He rode stolidly, his eyes on the endless frieze of hills, fields, towns, bordered by the window. Now and then someone spoke to him and he answered, but in a faraway manner; he was

too busy with the idea that for him the war was over—they were sending him home.

Home. Ever since he had been told about his leg a tremendous longing for home had taken hold on him—home and Edith.

Night after night he had lain in a wet trench and ached for the touch of Edith, with her flower face beneath its nimbus of gold and its star-eyes. Visions of her were veiled then; but now, when he was on his way to her, she stood out vividly a flesh woman, who would steady him with her pretty arms till he learned to use his crutches perfectly.

The train stopped beside the sea, and a tall man with an empty sleeve helped him aboard the ship. Here as on the train all about him were maimed men. The ship was very like the one he had seen the day he landed, huge and gray and manned, it seemed to him, entirely by cripples. Everywhere were crutches and bandages, never a whole man. Soon he got to know some of his fellow sufferers and began spending long, slow days with those like himself who were learning to walk on three legs. And how awkward it was, this new way of walking.

And the sun streamed down. For endless days he swung himself back and forth on the deck, sometimes going clear around the ship, absorbing the sunshine, making it a part of him. So many months of mud and damp and murk had passed over him that the clean ship and the sunlight dazzled; his strength, however, increased almost from minute to minute.

His good fellowship came back with the returning strength. The lost leg seemed to bother him less. He learned to play deck games as well as his comrades. But the nights were more difficult as each one drew him nearer home. The desire for Edith mastered sleep—but he must be well as possible when he saw her; so the walks were lengthened, often being continued until everyone else had gone below, until he became thoroughly tired.

Then one day the Statue of Liberty glided above the water, and the ship faced the up and down skyline behind

it. He fastened to a spot at the rail, eager for the first sight of Edith. He knew she would be at the dock, and in the soft pink silk he like best of all, and the black satin slippers. He would never have to leave her again. There had come times when he feared the U-boats, but that fear was absurd now—yonder was New York, and somewhere very near was Edith. A horrible thought sprang into being; his leg; would she mind—be wretched about it—love him less. Only for an instant did it live, however; he knew her too well, the fibre of her.

..... And there she stood, in the forefront of the waiting crowd, almost opposite him—pink dress, flower face, the whole lovely woman. His eyes strained to catch hers. Yes. . . . Now she saw him. His arm waved in the air, nearly sending his neighbor's service-cap into the black water of the harbor. She saw him. . . . She waved her tiny handkerchief. . . .

But the ship stopped, seeming to float away from the dock. No engine throb, no vibration came to him. A lightning flash and the drum of thunder caused the vessel to lurch crazily; and he slipped slowly down, down into the black water.

"By God, Bill, he's gone," said the second stretcher-bearer.

## Ingratitude

BY ISAAC GOLDBERG

IT is not so much that the unexpected always happens, but that what happens is so often unexpected. There is a difference. Or even—nothing happens. This is a little tale about a nothing that happened.

Clara gazed into her mirror. She saw, within the gilt, oval frame a winsome little girl of about twenty-one, herself a pinkish oval of dimpled cheeks in a frame of golden tresses that fell over her shoulders like a waterfall of sunbeams. She saw two round, gray eyes that looked back at her saucily—more saucily than they ever dared look when any one else was present. She did up her hair as if she were expecting a sweetheart rather than preparing for a visit to her newly wed chum. She stepped back and forth from the glass of enchantment (for such it was whenever she looked into it) a countless number of times, each time adding a touch of beauty with the unerring instinct of the gifted artist. And when she had surveyed herself for what she intended to be the last time, she sighed with mingled pride and relief at her own handiwork. Yet did she see *herself* as she looked again, in rapt farewell to the glass! Did she see the woman to whom colors were voices, and who made her waists, her ties, her ribbons and laces speak things that her tongue never dreamed? Artlessly, yet with an art before which men would gladly fall in worship, she had made of herself this wintry night a thing of beauty. Yet were a helpless man to proclaim his helplessness to her as she stood thus arrayed she would surely have taken fright and called for protection from the very worship that she herself had made the more certain. In some little cranny of her dainty soul perhaps a thought of these things sometimes flickered to life, then receded into the depths because maybe, it had come too soon. Oh, indeed! She knew she was pleasant to look upon, but persons must look while she was turned the other way. For then they would know that she did not know

they were gazing upon her. And she would know that they were.

The evening gleamed cool and clear. From an unclouded sky shone the chill, chaste light of a moon whose face, like that of some beauteous, anemic virgin, glowed with a frigid splendor which could not answer the passions she might suggest. The unromantic light of the night-sun found an icy bed in the still less romantic stretches of frozen snow that had covered completely, in the side streets, the sidewalks which in summer shot back the hot sun from their brick checker-boards.

Clara, stepping off the electric car that had brought her to the limits of the city—and of her patience, knew that a walk of some seven blocks lay before her. Seven suburban blocks, with their slippery hillocks of snow, might as well have been the Alps to this timid maiden in high heels which left a deep impress after every step. But if her bodily balance concerned her deeply, there were other things which disturbed the balance of Clara's thoughts in no less degree. When men visit a newly married boyhood chum for the first time there is none of that queer stiffness which now began to assail Clara on her first visit to Nell.

What should she say when she entered? How avoid those foolish platitudes which may be summed up in that insipid "How do you like married life?" How greet Nell? But a month before they were two carefree girlhood companions. And now—a man had come between. Clara felt puzzled before the necessity of adjusting herself to Nell's new state. For Nell was now a wife, and Clara still a girl. Such is the necromancy of words—and a man! Thoughts came swiftly; Clara even imagined that she detected a yearning within her to be married and settled even as Nell. With a natural impulse that quickens one's gait with a quickening of the thoughts she began to hurry along.

"Not a soul on the street except me," she told herself, after wondering why newlyweds simply will select the most out-of-the-way corners in which to build their first nests. Once or twice she looked around with a nervous suddenness, expecting to find someone at her heels. But only silence went

behind, while a dim fear stalked before. Further up the street an automobile was plowing two furrows of dirty snow as it made its laborious way toward her. One by one lights began to appear in the parlor windows of the apartments that ranged along the entire blocks. The sudden starting of a player-piano reminded her that it would be nice to reach her destination,—especially if Nell was having no trouble with the steam heat.

These and similar thoughts crowded upon Clara with a protesting vehemence that soon soured to disgust. But she was already approaching number 203, and she felt certain that Nell's domestic interior would compensate for the repellent outside view. She already seemed to behold Nell's figure in one of the windows; her disgust vanished in a hastened stride, and—

“Are you hurt, madam?”

At first Clara felt as if she were reading the words out of a book. Then they became corporeal and sounded like a far-off trumpet. Somebody was lifting her ever so gently from the snow-covered pavement into an automobile. She was too weak to utter any protests that came to her tongue; she felt, moreover, distinctly soothed by the tender voice of the man who addressed her. Backed up against a soft cushion upon a leather seat in the limousine she came quickly to herself, and felt but a trifle dazed from her fall.

“May I take you home?” asked the gentleman with the tender voice. “My machine was making its way through this impossible drift when I saw you slip. I do not think you are seriously hurt.” There was something so self-confident in the way the gentleman spoke that Clara felt immediately he was a physician. A small bag, in a corner, whence came a not unpleasant odor of carbolic acid, served to strengthen her belief.

Without a second thought Clara gave her address to the young doctor. He said a few words to his chauffeur; by this time they had reached the corner where a few moments before Clara had left the car. The auto turned to the right into a large avenue whose path had been cleared of some of the impeding snow. The sudden jerks and chugs gave way to an easy motion that soothed Clara but little less than the doctor's healing voice.

She was a trifle dazed,—that was all. When they were a quarter of the way home it suddenly struck her that she might have asked the kind young doctor to assist her to Nell's, at whose door she had fallen. It was now too late. For a moment a fear which she could trace to the last moving-picture she had seen at the *Empire* came to disturb the sense of ease which was beginning to steal over her. Was this man honest? Was the auto taking the right road? Was this solicitation totally disinterested? Girls had been abducted before by just such nice persons. She glanced out to make sure that they were on the right road and then a strange feeling came over Clara.

Just as excessive drink will temporarily break a man's power of inhibition,—will permit him to think thoughts and even accomplish deeds upon which the common sense of sobriety would frown, so she, in her mildly dazed condition, found nothing wrong in suddenly abandoning all fear and looking at her escort with a certain admiration. She even found herself moaning, altho she felt no pain, and knew that she did this just to hear the young doctor's sympathetic questionings and feel his professional touch upon her left wrist, which had been scratched by a sharp blade of ice.

She regarded him closely when he turned his face, and enjoyed it. There was nothing to fear from him, she thought. He looked like a hero of a moving-picture. A strange light-heartedness surged through her; for a moment she imagined that she would not even care if the auto took a direction different from that which led to her home. Once she caught him as he glanced admiringly in her direction. A touch of the old fear returned. "All men are alike, after all," she told herself. She even noticed that he was sidling closer to her by almost imperceptible degrees, but she did not move. For a moment she grew faint, but whether it was from the fall or because he seemed to approach her with a strange glint in his eyes, she could not tell.

From fear lest he should grow familiar, Clara sank into indifference. As they rode, indifference gradated ever so stealthily into the embryo of a hope that he might show at

least a bit more sympathy. It was all so romantic! Here were two people riding together, not six inches distant from each other, who had not met before, had never been introduced; she had already been in his arms! Perhaps—and Clara smiled weakly at the suggestion,—perhaps they were destined to marry. Stranger things had happened.

A languor, induced mainly by the fall and in lesser degree by the even motion of the limousine, slowly enfolded the injured girl. Once, when the physician peered a bit closely into her eyes Clara imagined that he was about to kiss her. A hot trembling seized her, but she was too weak or too indifferent to make any resistance. A second later and she was glad that she had not insulted the kind young man by revealing her unjust suspicions. The inside of the auto was warm, yet little chills began to creep up her back, and she feared that her fall would mean an attack of grippe. However, it was so comfortable here. She quite forgot that she was being taken home. It seemed that all her life she had been riding in a sumptuous limousine with a kind young doctor at her side.

“Are you in pain?”

It was the doctor who was speaking, “He must be talking to me,” reasoned Clara, and then for the first time realized that she must have swooned slightly, for she had come to herself with a quick inhalation, as if smelling salts had been placed under her nose.

“No,” she replied, drowsily. “I am perfectly comfortable.”

But she felt chilly, and came a trifle closer to him. His arm was still about her waist. In her fainting spell she had slipped from the seat. Replacing her against the cushion, the physician withdrew his arm. Clara felt just the tiniest mite of resentment that he should be so utterly and impeccably correct in all he did. Sometimes it is brutal to be merely polite, she thought, making a determined effort to keep her eyes open.

They were now approaching the vicinity in which Clara lived. A sharp turn of the machine brought the young doctor for a moment face to face with his charge, and his trained

eyes perceived easily that she was not so well as her words would indicate. "Concussion," murmured the physician to himself, rather by way of suggesting a possibility than naming a decided opinion. The girl with him seemed to have fallen asleep. He leaned over her as closely as he could come without touching her, seeking to find on her forehead or temple any signs of serious injury.

Clara, however, had not fallen asleep. She felt a queer comfort throughout her entire discomfiture. Sick people tell of a strange desire that comes to them at moments of great physical weakness, when they actually desire unconsciousness much as tired health looks forward to sleep. Even so, to Clara in her dazed state, came a scarcely definable desire to dream. The young man's face began to fascinate her. Now when he came so closely to her that she could feel the delicate rhythms of his breath she felt sure the moment had come at last. For the briefest part of a second she detected, far back in the subconscious recesses of her mind, a feeling that it was mean of a gentleman to take advantage of a bruised lady under his charge and kiss her when she was powerless to protest. But only for the smallest fraction of a moment, and only in some deep recess of her mind. For, weak as she was, she actually raised her lips to the coming contact, and a thrill of pleasure rippled through her being.

She closed her eyes, expecting the kiss, which she desired with all the strength that was in her at the moment. An eternity seemed to pass, until, growing impatient, she opened her eyes, only to find the doctor seated in his former position of professional, considerate, well-mannered aloofness. A wave of anger inundated the injured girl. She shrank into herself, felt even weaker than before, and seemed to be strongly impressed with the fact she had just been insulted.

"This is where you live, I believe!"

The auto had stopped before a familiar door. At sight of her home Clara seemed to be transported from a vague dream-land back to every-day reality. She attempted to rise, with the intention of leaving the stone-hearted doctor abruptly and

slamming the door in his face. But she could scarce maintain herself upon her feet.

"Allow me," suggested the doctor, in a voice whose tenderness had lost half of its charm. Unwillingly Clara permitted herself to be helped to the street and escorted into the door of her residence.

"I am all right now," she pleaded, determined that the physician should not come into her house with her. And then, almost roughly, "You may go. Thank you. Good night."

The doctor pressed a bell that brought Clara's brother to the door. A few words of explanation, and the brother showered the young physician with the thanks that Clara neither spoke nor felt.

"Glad to have been of service," she heard the tender, yet cold voice say. But she did not look around. He was a tender young man no longer. He was a brute. He was a churl who had refused to kiss a woman, who hadn't even had the sense to appreciate the fact that — He was a brute, that's all!





# THE STRATFORD JOURNAL

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*AN INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE*

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# THE STRATFORD JOURNAL

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OCTOBER, NINETEEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTEEN

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*The single fixed policy of the Stratford Journal is to endeavor to print the best in foreign and native literature. It is allied to no fad or cult and committed to no 'ology' or 'ism'. It welcomes the work of new writers particularly.*

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## The Hunchback (“IL GOBBO”)

*A War-Story of Today's Italian Fighting Spirit*

By ROBERTO BRACCO

TRANSLATED BY IRVING ORMOND

[Roberto Bracco is one of the chief dramatists of contemporary Italy. His plays are particularly noted for their fearless attitude towards modern problems, especially such as relate to the position of woman in society. He is a realistic psychologist, and for his skill in terse, concentrated dialogue has been likened to Ibsen. As a short story writer he enjoys a large following. — Ed.]

ON THE small stage of the little open-air theatre attached to the Tripoli café, Plebiscito Square, a brazen, moon-faced songstress, with her dress cut audaciously short and cheeks heavily powdered, had just finished shouting a popular song in which were mingled snatches from the Mameli hymn, the Garibaldi hymn and the royal march. As she sang she kicked about with her opulent legs and, within the glare of a spotlight, waved the national flag as if it were a fly-swatter. The crowd, which was sipping its refreshments under the gentle eyes of the starry heaven, was not very much moved by the song. Perhaps it had been side-tracked by the inopportune gymnastic exhibition of the interpreter. The applause was scant and scattered.

“They're nothing but beasts!” exclaimed Attanasio Cocco in an all-inclusive manner, pronouncing the “b” of the word “beast” in an explosive fashion, after having tried to rekindle the applause with his insistent hand-clapping.

“Thanks!” said Professor Armandi, who every evening

presided over the small group that regularly gathered around the most secluded table. "Yes, I thank you, for your indictment includes me also. I did not applaud."

"We know that our Cocco is a doughty warrior," added the notary Filippo Ramarra seriously, scratching his ear, as he usually did when he felt that he had perpetrated a particularly malignant remark. "So that we shouldn't be surprised to find him going into such ecstasies over a song of warlike character."

Attanasio Cocco's head, encased between the protuberances that rose from his chest, his shoulders and his back, vibrated visibly. The entire countenance, with its expression of the hunchback's pride, became alive with greater haughtiness than ever. His chin, which was but a short distance from the level of the table, rose slightly and pointed in the direction of the notary, and a proud glitter seemed to pass across his mouth, apparently without lips, across the tawny hair of his curled moustache, his long, beaklike nose, his blue, slanting eyes, and over his ample, gnarled forehead. His forehead was cut by the brim of his white felt hat, which was placed to one side at a devil-may-care tilt. He listened silently to the explosion of remarks that broke out at the expense of his patriotic countrymen, and then to the brilliant discussion that, as a natural consequence, the group devoted nightly to the question: Was the nation right in joining the brutal war that had broken out in Europe? Professor Armandi, who taught history and asserted that he represented its serenity and impartiality, made clear once more the historical principles that had led him to recognize both excessive neutrality and triumphant intervention as being equally rational. But the other debaters excluded all conciliatory opinions, and whether, as with some, through genuine obstinacy, or as with others, just to poke fun at the hunchback, they plunged excitedly into the shameless discussion of neutrality.

"Don't speak so loudly," cautioned the prudence of the professor, when he began to feel that they were going too far. "Take care that you're not overheard. It might cost you dear."

Whereupon Filippo Ramarra, with an expression of ironic contrition, wailed, "Ah! As it is, we poor fellows have already been punished. The thunderbolts of Jove the Avenger were a mere bagatelle compared to the dagger-glances that Cocco is throwing our way!"

The hunchback was silent. Not a movement. Not a word. But as the ultra-pacifist talk continued on its monotonous, petulant, insupportable way, the hunchback, with quiet resoluteness, put the money in the tray to cover his bill and arose to go.

"What? You're going?"

"Are you leaving us?"

"Are you going to abandon us to our ignorance?"

"To our wretchedness?"

"To our debasement?"

He, raising his head erect and shoving his hands into his trousers pockets, stuck out the protuberances of his chest and cast a glance of scorn at the pacifists. Then, disdainfully turning the hump of his back upon them, he strode off.

"That's shabby treatment, Cocco!"

"You don't understand. We're all fond of you."

"Be sure to be here tomorrow evening."

"We'll wait for you."

The hunchback's bizarre figure gave no sign of having heard. Implacable, he continued on his way, moving with a solemn gait. And the solemnity of that stately stride seemed to signify that all humanity should feel the deepest shame, or at least some sort of grief, at not being normally hunchbacked.

Comments began to sparkle among the small gathering.

"The Eternal Father never played such a prank as when he fixed the obsession of patriotism in the brain of our unfortunate friend."

"It can't be denied that he isn't built for the part."

"Why, he discredits patriotism."

"The only thing that we can really concede to him is his sincerity. He does sincerely palpitate for this war. It electrifies him."

"I'm not so sure of that," interjected the evil-tongued notary with his customary scratch at his ear. "I don't know

what you mean by sincerity. What I do know is that he palpitates for the war and is electrified by it because he is sure that he risks nothing in it. He has no fear of new taxes, because his little patrimony is in titles and is under lock and key in a safety vault of the Bank of Naples. Neither does he run the risk of having some one dear to him killed in battle, for he hasn't any sons, any brothers, any uncles or a father. His only relative is his Garibaldian grandfather who we see from time to time, dressed up like a peacock, trailing along in some memorial procession. But that valiant fellow, with the ninety-two years that weigh down his legs and his spinal column, no longer has any need of dying for his country. And as for poor Cocco himself! There's no doubt about him; no going to war on his part. Unless he's requisitioned by the munitions department as a monster dum-dum projectile!"

The picture of Attanasio Cocco aroused by this comparison caused a burst of laughter similar to that of the spectators at a circus when they are excited by the acrobatic buffoonery of the clown.

On the next evening the hunchback was waited for in vain. At first his absence was attributed to an anger of brief duration, a passing wrath, and since his companions felt that he would soon reappear, they began to plan a festive reception, or rather, a subtly burlesque one. But as nights passed and still he did not reappear, the members of the little group began to feel that they had hurt him gravely. Somebody suggested that in order to win him back they should send him a cordial letter, signed by the entire gathering. The noble proposal was fully discussed, however, and finally eliminated because it was feared lest, in the letter, he behold a new offense. They came to the conclusion that their request for his return would lack the element of undoubted sincerity unless the serene authority of Professor Armandi was entrusted with the charge. And when that personage was kind enough to accept the mission, promising to see the hunchback personally in order to appease his anger in intimate conversation, the unanimous confidence broke out in shouts of enthusiasm.

But Professor Armandi was unable even to find Cocco. Cocco no longer lived at the furnished rooms on Speranzella street, where he had seemed to find refuge from his roving restlessness. Whither had he gone? The landlady, interviewed by the professor, could not give any information.

"He simply left us one fine day, without any special reason, and without leaving his new address with me or the janitor. Who knows what whim entered his head! I never saw such a fellow before! Understand me, not a bad sort at all. Quite the opposite. He's a fine chap. But disfigured in mind as well as in body. Do you know what he often used to do in his rooms? He'd swing an iron club about or stab the air with a rusty sabre."

"Are you sure of that?" asked the professor, astonished.

"I saw it myself through the keyhole. He used to hit the furniture, by mistake. You see! And I'd hear a devilish racket, and being afraid that he'd do damage to my belongings I'd run up and take a look. And do you know what else he used to do? He used to declaim!"

"You don't say so!"

"Yes, sir, just like an actor."

"But what would he declaim?"

"I didn't understand a word of it. Once I asked him. 'What's this thing, Signor Cocco, that you're reciting?' and he hollered into my ear, 'Carlucci!'"

"He must have said Carducci."

"Carducci or Carlucci—it was all the same to me. I knew as much as before. I tell you, he was up to the craziest stunts! And the last thing he did was to buy two guns and a revolver. What was he going to do with them? I assure you, he hasn't it in him to kill even a fly. He has got a heart of soft pastry. Why, one morning I showed him a little mouse in a trap, and he began to snivel, 'Poor little thing. Let 'er go!' So, as for his intending to kill—not on your life! He bought those two guns and that revolver just out of a whim. So he's gone! I'm glad of it! And may the Lord's hand rest on his head, if his head is really still on his shoulders!"

The professor's attention was fixed most acutely upon the

purchasing of the arms. And that evening, as he related to his friends the unforseen and unforeseeable result of his investigation, he did not fall, with his wonted equilibrium, to amplify upon so important a circumstance. He pondered over the most extravagant and most contradictory suppositions, maintaining that none of these should be refused consideration. At last the hypothesis that Attanasio Cocco had contemplated suicide was declared by him to be plausible.

"The story the landlady told me reveals a man of whom some strange deed is to be expected. I admit that in order to commit suicide you don't need to buy three weapons. One is enough. But a suicide also has the right, at the last moment, of choosing the weapon most to his taste. It's all very clear to me."

And this gloomy hypothesis gradually assumed in the minds of the little gathering more probability than any other. They reviewed the reasons that might have impelled Attanasio Cocco to do away with himself. Many of them appeared to be most uncompromisingly logical, most incontestably clear. They spoke of him with tender compassion. One of them began to eulogize the integrity of his character and his patriotic sentiments. The notary, to be sure, this time restrained himself from scratching his ear, but not from voicing his thought.

"Really, these eulogies are premature. I agree that he would be well entitled to them if he had really died. But since we are not yet sure of that, I believe we should dismiss the eulogizing."

The hearers did not understand that Filippo Ramarra had uttered one of his most subtly malicious gibes; they believed, instead, that he had wished, with his judicious turn of mind, to repress the too hasty necrological effusiveness of the gathering.

"Right! Perfectly right!" pronounced the professor oracularly, thus reconciling optimism and pessimism. "We're letting our imaginations run off with us. And imagination is the enemy of history and truth! Besides, if all people for whom suicide would be a logical act were actually to commit suicide,

very few folks would be left on earth. We'll pursue our investigations to the utmost, and by Jove, we'll find our Cocco more alive than ever!"

But they did not find him. From day to day the zeal of their hunt diminished. The alarming notion of Cocco's having committed suicide fell away before the assurance of their indolent egotism. Without any reason whatever they were content with the explanation that the hunchback had left Naples and transferred his mental and physical peculiarities to some other city. Less and less did the talk turn to him. The summer passed. Autumn dispersed the little evening open-air gathering. And the pacifism of the idlers disintegrated in the routine of personal affairs, while the world was in flames.

It was eight o'clock in the morning. In a courtyard hard by an old out-of-the-way road there swarmed a gray mass of men, some gesticulating and a few shouting, most of them naked to the waist and dirty. Upon this crowd several territorial soldiers, armed with guns and with bayonets fixed, exercised their platonic and superfluous authority. And among the swarm, walking up and down with nervous briskness, an enormous cigar in his mouth, his hands thrust into his pockets, his head erect and his hat aslant, was Attanasio Cocco.

"Well, what's doing?" he asked suddenly, turning to a tall, massive soldier.

The latter, looking into the dwarf's face, replied, "They're waiting."

Then he looked a bit more closely at the hunchback and added, "But you—why are you here?"

"There's a question! I belong to one of the discarded classes that must appear before the military board. Here I am. Don't you like it?"

"Who, I? I've got no objection."

"If you think they're not going to take me, you're mistaken. They need men. You don't know what Napoleon said: 'To win, we need three things: men, men and more men.' What do you think of that?"

"I? Nothing."

“Well, I’m a man the same as you.”

The soldier was shocked. Attanasio Cocco saluted him in military fashion, touching the brim of his hat, and went off.

The gray swarm of men hummed about him in a mingling of gestures and voices, and comprised a fluctuating mass that was at the same time homogeneous and varied. Before his eyes there passed, disappeared and reappeared wan, emaciated faces, or visages puffed up like a bladder, scrofulous, pocked, or other faces, over which the beard had purposely been allowed to grow so as to hide something of their cadaverous appearance. His ears caught angry phases, bitter complaints, loud assertions of every species of illness, clamorous confessions of physical irregularities that are ordinarily wrapped by decency in a veil of mystery. Disgusted, he chuckled to himself, blowing the smoke from his cigar through his mouth and his nose, and now and then casting a glance at the tall, massive soldier, whose curious eyes he felt upon his shoulder.

At nine o’clock there came from outside two officials with the grade of major who crossed the little hole with lowered heads, nimble yet surely in their movements. The babbling ceased at once and there was an awed whisper: “The doctors! The doctors!”

Five minutes later the bearded corporal shouted from the stairs, “Forward!” And it seemed as if the fluctuating mass had been whipped by a violent gust of wind. The crowd surged toward the stairs like a monstrous wave against a reef. At once a group of patient territorials faced the men, and there came the stern injunction of the bearded corporal, “Not all at once! Ten at a time!” In the general struggle provoked by the desire of every man there to be examined as soon as possible and thus shorten the anxious wait before he learned his fate, Attanasio Cocco, who was in similar haste, although with intentions and hopes very different from those of the others, had little luck. Shoved, pushed, bounced, squeezed, trampled upon, pressed—he had to wait a long time. And when he was able to avail himself of his turn his heart beat with confused joy amounting almost to intoxication. He

bounded up stairs with the agility of a bat. He no longer saw anything, no longer scorned anything, but in full, jubilant surrender, gave himself over entirely to the territorials, who handled him as they would a doll. He was led to the end of a corridor, before an old sunburnt fellow who was seated at a table. He was not a soldier, yet Attanasio gave him the military salute and drew himself up before him in military fashion. In cross tones the old man asked him, "Your summons?"

"What do you mean, summons?"

"Fool!"

"Who is the fool?"

"Quickly now. We've got no time to waste. The summons is the order for you to present yourself. You received it from the Government."

"O yes!—I left it at home. I couldn't go back to get it, you see, because I live far away—in the country. Yes, indeed! —I wanted to live in the country so that I could acquire skill at target-practice—"

"Enough! Don't bother me. If you haven't the summons that doesn't make much difference. Sign here."

He signed. The old man tore the paper rudely from his grasp. Upon this, in addition to general details, was to be written the decision of the physicians. The territorials, sending him from one of their number to the other, at length brought him to the door of the dressing-room which he entered with a brusque bounce as if he had been kicked in by an invisible foot.

From that moment an extraordinary emotion took possession of his mind, benumbed his senses and robbed him of consciousness. The dressing-room had been in use for some time. In the large, dirty hall, men, nude or half nude, meagre and emaciated, rose timidly from the benches ranged along the wall, or wretchedly huddled together in their seats, shivering with the cold. Cocco, however, heard nothing of their talk, their sighs, their mumblings. He did not look at them, did not see them, did not think of them. He had lost the faculty of beholding them, and of feeling that he was seen by them.

He undressed in great haste without even realizing what he was doing. If he had been asked to tell what he was doing he would not have been able to say. Living through his strangest hour, he was living out of his life altogether. He felt life, at that moment, as one can feel life who dreams without knowing that he is dreaming. And he continued not to hear, not to see, not to understand, not to perceive, until the sentence, pronounced little by little in the adjacent room by one of the doctors, with all the harshness of regulation terminology, shocked him brutally back to reality.

“Rejected because of deformed chest.”

A shudder of burning rebellion ran through him, and sarcastically he mimicked, “Rejected, because of a corn!”

“See here, none of your impudence. Fill out your blank and be off.”

“Rejected! Why, I’ve got legs and arms of iron. I’ve got lungs like a horse’s. I handle all weapons like a master.”

“That’s got nothing to do with the military board. Shut up and clear out!”

“Does a fellow have to be an Adonis to defend his country?”

“I’m performing my duty, with the regulations right in my hand.”

“It’s infamous! It’s a piece of imbecility!”

“You’re crazy. You ought to ask to be admitted into an asylum.”

“That so? You think I’m a fit subject for a lunatic asylum, do you? Well,” added Attanasio Cocco, shouting, “Down with the war! Down with the war!”

“Guards! Take this madman into custody!”

“My country refuses to accept me as a soldier; then I oppose her! Down with the war!”

The guards dragged him forcefully into the dressing-room, and he, fighting frantically, continued to make an uproar.

“Yes, I oppose my country, by heaven! I want to be tried! I want to be shot!” His shouts reverberated against the walls, echoed in the corridor and on the stairs, producing

a trembling stupefaction among the naked and half-naked men and among those in uniform. "What's the trouble?" . . . "What's up?" . . . "Some coward!" . . . "An anarchist!" . . . "A deserter!" . . . "A traitor!" . . .

Several minutes later a new surprise was ready for them. Between two guards, handcuffed, the hunchback came marching by.

It was toward the end of October, 1917.

The little group of the Tripoli café called together in session extraordinary by telegrams and telephone messages from Professor Armandi, had met in the billiard room toward sunset, at which time the players regularly dispersed. The professor, having arrived late in the hope of thus stimulating his friends' curiosity, made public without preamble the remarkable news:

"Attanasio Cocco, hale and hearty, has been arrested!"

A loud protest of incredulity arose, and the professor did not care to abate it by confirmation of explanation. When the tumult had subsided, he took from his pocket a letter, with the attitude of an actor who is very well acquainted with the art of surprise.

"This letter," he said, "is from Attanasio Cocco. I'll read it to you."

"A letter from him!"

"From prison!"

"Why, this is queer!"

"Hush, hush. Let's hear it."

There was a profound silence, and the professor, accenting each word, read as follows:

Dear Professor Armandi—For some fifteen months you and your friends have been without news of me. I suppose, therefore, that it will give you some pleasure to learn that I am very well. And I think it will afford you still greater pleasure to hear that since yesterday I have been in prison because I wanted to fight for my country together with all those who love her. To all appearances it is a temporary imprisonment. Several competent authorities have found me to be insane, sug-

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gesting that I be sent to the asylum. It's not at all improbable that I really am crazy. But if there were many lunatics like me . . .

At this point the professor showed that a black blot had covered the remainder of the phrase. Then, letting the letter fall upon the table, he repeated, from memory, its closing lines:

Ever so many cordial greetings to the company! Plenty of good wishes to you and to your study of history! . . .

As ever, yours,  
Attanasio Cocco.

Then the comments began: weak, uncertain, most circumspect and not at all cheerful. Despite the special importance of the enigmatic and tragic-comic letter of the hunchback, the conversation languished. No one dared to speak. No one dared to utter a jest. The pacifist good-timers could find neither their wonted loquacity nor their thoughtless sallies. They became grave. They were silent.

In a corner of the same room there had, meanwhile, taken their places two captains of the sharpshooters, one with a black monocle before a blind eye, the other with his arm swathed in a large bandage that hung from his neck. One of the men was reading a newspaper in a soft, emotional voice. His companion listened intently. Several words floated through the air to where the little group sat:

" . . . and they were unable to keep the enemy from setting foot upon the sacred soil of our Fatherland."

The men in the group trembled. . . .

# Poetry

## THE DAISY SPEAKS

BY PAUL ELDRIDGE

What am I?  
The poets have named me  
A star, and a sun, and a ripple  
Of a silver and golden sea,  
And the amorous virgin  
Has kissed and caressed me,  
And asked of my petals  
Her fate;  
The rain has pattered on me  
With the rhythm  
Of quick-silver sticks  
On a drum,—  
And the moon,  
An evening or two ago,  
Whitened and glared me so,  
I seemed a thin and shivering ghost!

The earth is whispering softly—  
This day,  
When shadows shall drop  
On her bosom,  
The granite-made hoof  
Of the mountainous cow  
Shall fall  
With the weight of a world  
On me, and render me  
Mud!

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But now—  
A windlet is sporting with me,  
And shakes me, and shakes me,  
Like a silent and golden tongue  
Of an unseen bell!

What am I?

### TIME'S CASTANETS

By PAUL ELDRIDGE

Topsy with my sweetheart's kisses,  
I whispered in her mouth—  
"Dearest—  
Our Love—  
Our wonder Love  
Is like yonder star—  
Immortal—"

Time,  
Hidden in a spider's web,  
Rattled castanets,  
Of bones,  
And laughed . . . .

I know not  
What my sweetheart heard—  
My whisper in her mouth—  
Or Time's castanets—

But she wept—

### IN A MAGIC WOOD OF THE NIGHT

By EDWARD SAPIR

She was lovelier than I could bear.  
I could hardly see 'the beauty of her face  
For the film of dream that descended before her.

I did not dare to embrace with my eye  
The full splendor of her hair,  
Of her hair, black of night.  
I could only lose my way  
In the loose strands of her falling tresses,  
Golden-edged of the light—  
I could only walk as in a dream  
In a magic wood of the night,  
Where still gleams burn to conceal.  
I did not dare to gaze upon her,  
I could only guess at her fingers,  
Her fingers white that touched my dream  
And made it tremulous.  
Her hands and her falling hair—  
Behind them was she  
Whose beauty I could not bear to see!  
And this was my prayer in ecstasy,  
“Oh let me walk in the magic wood  
Till I dare to wake  
And see the loveliness of her,  
Till I dare to have courage,  
Courage to call her beloved.”

RESTAURANT TABLES

BY MARY CAROLYN DAVIES

The little tables in restaurants  
That are made for lovers to talk across,  
The eager little tables  
Would have much to tell each other  
If they could meet.

Some have seen a kiss  
Given in a glance.  
Others have seen moments made  
Which will last forever.

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A red, mother-of-pearl table in San Francisco  
On which rest two cups without handles,  
And on which tea is spilt,  
Could tell of young lovers quarreling,  
And with rude, quick, hands breaking all their sweetest memories  
So that the bitterness inside oozes forth.

A table in an uptown hotel  
Stiff with crystal and cut flowers,  
Prim with an array of forks and glasses  
Seeming placed in their spheres by the music that is near,  
Could tell of words like budding seeds  
Breaking through the hard frozen ground of youth  
And springing to sudden sunlight.

And the little rough wooden table  
In George's on Sixth Avenue  
Knows what you said to me  
Last evening.

### THE DANCER

BY MARY CAROLYN DAVIES

I watch the dancer  
Bending  
Lithely stooping  
Leaping, rippling,  
Her motions changing  
As though she were a song of many notes:  
Her white robes swaying  
Her scarves like water under wind  
Her face held up to joy  
As a leaf to sunlight,  
Her arms yearning and crying out for beauty,  
Reaching up  
And pulling down beauty upon her head,  
Then flinging it from her, to our outstretched hands.

But it is you  
Calm, restrained, motionless,  
Sitting beside me in your orchestra seat, watching her also.  
It is you whom I see dancing with such ecstasy,  
Tortured with music  
Mad with motion  
Giving yourself to your joy ;  
It is your throat upon whose whiteness the light falls,  
Your transfigured face I see  
Held up to gladness  
As a leaf of sunlight,  
And your lifted arms  
Asking, and holding beauty.

You  
Seeing my tranced eyes fixed upon her  
Are a little jealous.  
— You need not be,  
Beloved.

### A CLUB

BY MARY CAROLYN DAVIES

The little smoky room  
Has seen many things.

The little smoky room  
Where the young men sit,  
Blowing dreams from their cigarettes,  
Shaping them with their lips  
And watching them rise and die with equal languor—

The little smoky room  
Has known tragedies.

In young men's eyes  
It has seen births  
And deaths . . .



# THE BETTER SON

A DOMESTIC DRAMA IN ONE ACT

BY

ISAAC GOLDBERG



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## PERSONS

*MRS. RUBIN, a widow of fifty*

*JOSEPH, her favorite son, aged twenty-eight*

*ISAAC, his brother, twenty-seven*

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## SCENE

*The dining-room in the Rubin household. To the left a table is set for supper; on it are placed two candlesticks, holding unlit candles. To the right a door leading to the rest of the apartment. At the rear, a window on the left and another on the right. The furnishings indicate a family in comfortable circumstances. As the curtain rises MRS. RUBIN is seen pulling down the shades of the windows. She then lights the candles, and stands before them a moment as she murmurs the regular Sabbath eve blessing. JOSEPH sits idly by, reading a newspaper.*

## The Better Son

MRS. RUBIN: Well, may the coming week bring us God's blessings.

JOSEPH (*Perfunctorily*): Amen.

MRS. RUBIN: Were there many at the synagogue this evening, Joe?

JOSEPH (*Without looking up from his paper*): I wasn't — that is — the customary number.

MRS. RUBIN (*Hesitatingly*): Was — Isaac there?

JOSEPH (*Impatiently*): I don't know — I didn't see him.

MRS. RUBIN (*Surprised*): Didn't see him? Is the synagogue so large — ?

JOSEPH: I'm not feeling any too well, mother, and to tell the truth I took little notice of anyone there. I wouldn't be surprised if Isaac was missing. You know how religious he is! (*With a trace of venom.*) Catch him, with his superior ways, going into a synagogue!

MRS. RUBIN (*Hurt*): Where can he be spending all his time these nights? I've noticed lately that his business suffers, too. He's such a quiet boy. It's so hard to get a word out of his mouth.

JOSEPH (*Insinuating*): Yes, yes — a quiet fellow. Those are the sort you must look out for. . . . Well, for my part, let him do as he pleases.

MRS. RUBIN: That's not right, Joe my child. To a mother, even if she has a weakness for a favorite child, all children are near and dear. She suffers for them before their birth, and too often, afterwards also. (*Shaking her head.*) I feel that something is on his mind. He doesn't eat well. He doesn't sleep soundly. He looks pale. He —

JOSEPH: Why doesn't he keep better hours, then?

MRS. RUBIN: There, there. That's just the point. Why?

JOSEPH (*Rising and going to table*): Well, mother, we've waited long enough. Let's begin to eat. I'm real hungry.

MRS. RUBIN: A little while longer, Joe, just a few minutes. It was your father's greatest pleasure to gather his little family around him on a Friday night and talk over, by the light of the sacred candles, all the good times of long ago. After all, what is left of the glory of the Jews but their Friday nights and another holiday or two? Keep in your hunger for a few moments. I'm sure Isaac will be here right away.

JOSEPH: Did you ever see? First we have to put up with his crazy notions, listen to all his nonsense, and now we have to wait for his royal highness before sitting down to eat! — I'll wait very little longer for him, let me tell you!

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MRS. RUBIN: Joe, this time you are wrong. Have we not often waited for you? I see little enough of either of you during the week; let our Friday nights, at least, be an unbroken tradition.

JOSEPH: I'm hungry, I say. I'll not wait. (*He goes to the table, cuts a loaf of bread, sits down, and continues reading as he eats.*)

MRS. RUBIN (*Astonished*): Joseph, what have you done? For the first time since you were confirmed you have broken bread on the Sabbath eve without saying grace! You must be mad! God forgive us, but this betokens ill luck!

JOSEPH (*Seeing his error*): There, mother, I ask your pardon. I'll not eat. I'll wait. But I'm mighty hungry just the same. I wish be'd come!

MRS. RUBIN (*Going to the door*): No, it is not he. I thought I heard his step.

JOSEPH: It'll be several hours before you do, unless I'm greatly mistaken! (*Smiles knowingly.*) You should have guessed long ago what ails him!

MRS. RUBIN: What do you mean? Do you know?

JOSEPH (*Tauntingly*): Oh, I suppose I can guess, like anybody else. When a fellow's sleepless, restless, pale, quiet,—what else can be the matter, but love? Isaac is in love, that's all there is to it, mother!

MRS. RUBIN (*Laughing*): Ha, Joe! You said that as if you were telling of a crime! Would that you would take the same course yourself. It is your place first, you are a year older than he. If that were all, how happy I'd be!

JOSEPH (*Darkly*): Sometimes it is a crime, mother.—There, is that he coming?

MRS. RUBIN (*Going to the door*): Yes. . . . No, I'm mistaken again. (*Joseph is angered at the protracted wait.*) I'd hate ever so much to eat without him. But if it must be, I suppose we may as well begin now. Ah! Things aren't as they used to be. (*She bustles about the table reluctantly, glancing at the door from time to time. She is purposely deliberate in her actions.*) When your father was alive, peace be to his soul, Friday night found us always together. (*As she places some food on the table she knocks over a candle.*) Joseph, Joseph, I fear that is a bad omen. Don't you think we'd better wait a little while? Come, Joe, you've always been my better son, can't you try to restrain your hunger just a few minutes more? It is not so much for Isaac's sake, no — for he has shown himself unworthy. But think of our traditions.

JOSEPH: Let him think of our traditions, too! Do you imagine that just because he chooses to be spending his time with some girl or other that we must attend his pleasure? I've a good mind . . . to spoil his little game before it goes any further!

MRS. RUBIN: What do you mean? You shouldn't speak like that

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unless you're sure of what you say. The way you talk lately you make me fear that he is up to something wrong.

JOSEPH: Well, if you thought so you mightn't be so far from the truth. That's all I say.

MRS. RUBIN: If that's all you say, you say less than nothing — worse than nothing. You leave my mind open to every suspicion. Isaac may be a queer boy and have his own irreligious notions, but of wrong-doing I should never suspect him. Your words make me uneasy. Either tell me more, or take back what you have said.

JOSEPH (*Sullen*): I take back nothing. Let's eat.

MRS. RUBIN: Very well, you may eat. I will wait.

JOSEPH: So! Your master hasn't arrived yet, eh? That's something new to me, I must confess. Well, I will eat, and if you wish to hunger for him, go ahead.

MRS. RUBIN: Lately you seem to have taken a strong dislike to Isaac. Remember he is my son as well as you. He has his faults; so have we all. We must be charitable.

JOSEPH: You'll be listening to his foolish ideas yet (*Eating*), and taking stock in them. (MRS. RUBIN looks on in restrained indignation.)

MRS. RUBIN: For his foolish ideas he shall suffer, not we.

JOSEPH: But here *you* are suffering. I could swear you're half starved, after a whole day's work putting the house in order for Sabbath eve.

MRS. RUBIN: I wait, but not for him. For years, ever since your birth, it has been thus, that Friday nights found the whole family together. It is nothing to you, perhaps. To us old folks it means much, — oh so much. And that custom you, not he, have broken.

JOSEPH (*Angrily*): I say *he* has broken it. *He!* Who told him to stay out late tonight? He knows the custom as well as I. Then why doesn't he show up in time? (*Sulking.*) Who tells him to hang around women, anyway?

MRS. RUBIN: Joe, either you tell me more or say nothing, do you hear?

JOSEPH (*Menacingly*): Little good it will do you to hear!

MRS. RUBIN: I'll ask him as soon as he comes in.

JOSEPH: That's right. Start another rumpus. We've been quiet for too long, it seems.

MRS. RUBIN: I've made my mind up. And it's *you* who start the rumpus, let me tell you. If you would have the courage to back up what you've accused him of —

JOSEPH: I will, confound him. I will. And don't blame me for what happens afterwards. He is in love with a certain girl!

MRS. RUBIN: Whom, do you know?

JOSEPH: What's the difference? She's a Gentile!

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MES. RUBIN (*Dazed*): God in Heaven, you are lying, Joseph, you are lying!

JOSEPH: You'll know soon enough, when he elopes with her.

MES. RUBIN: Joseph, you are stabbing me with every word. For God's sake be quiet, be quiet!

JOSEPH: You wanted to know. I told you.

MES. RUBIN (*After a moment of confusion*): Listen, Joe. I want help here. I need it. You have, after all, been my better son. But we mustn't forget that he is our blood. We must save him from the horrible end that he is preparing for himself. And you must aid me. Without you I am helpless.

JOSEPH (*Indifferently*): What can we do? We must warn him.

MES. RUBIN: Listen, Joe. Say nothing when he comes in—

JOSEPH: Huh! What is it my affair?

MES. RUBIN: I'll take him aside and talk with him. Then we shall see. May Heaven guide him from his folly!

JOSEPH: Well, you may as well sit down and eat. (MES. RUBIN sits down and eats without appetite. She cannot take her eyes off the door.) Well, I'm feeling better now. (Rises, walks forward.) There! (*Listens.*) Those are his footsteps. (Enter ISAAC. He walks over to his mother, after nodding meaninglessly to JOSEPH.)

ISAAC: See, mother, what I've brought you. (He offers her a little package, but she greets him with a pale smile, and does not notice his offer. ISAAC looks around, astonished. Looks hard at JOSEPH, who smiles sardonically.)

MES. RUBIN: It is time you eat, Isaac. We waited, until we had to eat without you.

ISAAC (*Significantly*): Thank you. I have had enough of a supper already. (Sits down dejectedly. JOSEPH casts an insinuating glance at his mother and walks out of the room. There is a painful silence. MES. RUBIN makes several attempts to speak to ISAAC, but he seems to be looking through the walls at some outward scene.)

MES. RUBIN: Isaac!

ISAAC: Yes, mother.

MES. RUBIN: Are you ill?

ISAAC: I am not well.

MES. RUBIN: What ails you, my son?

ISAAC (*Sadly*): You cannot help me.

MES. RUBIN: Tell me. Perhaps I can.

ISAAC (*Looking at her sharply*): Mother! (Changing his mind.) If you could aid me, mother, I should long ago have asked you.

MES. RUBIN: Then you know her a long — the matter is — (ISAAC fairly jumps at the word "her." MES. RUBIN notices it, and pursues a different tack, but too late.)

ISAAC (*Sternly*): Who has been talking to you?

MES. RUBIN (*Kindly*): What is the difference? I know, you see.

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ISAAC: Only one could have told you.

MRS. RUBIN (*Simply*): And so he did.

ISAAC (*Suppressing his anger*): I see. (*Rising.*) I see!

MRS. RUBIN: It was for your good, Isaac. Sit down, please. I want to talk with you. (*ISAAC, foreseeing her intention, sits down resignedly.*)

ISAAC: For my good. I see. I see, for my good. (*His mind is evidently elsewhere.*)

MRS. RUBIN: Is it true?

ISAAC: Is what true?

MRS. RUBIN: Oh Isaac, Isaac, why do you wring your mother's heart? He tells me you love a Gentile, God forgive you, a Gentile! (*ISAAC is visibly moved. He goes over to his mother and seeks to comfort her. She is encouraged.*) Isaac, is it true?

ISAAC: It is true, mother, and it isn't.

MRS. RUBIN: Don't speak in riddles, my son. Your life is dear to me, but rather would I see you in the grave with your father than to have you marry outside the faith. (*ISAAC makes a gesture of despair.*) Listen, son. Have patience with your old mother. I know I am sentimental and uneducated. But I mean only your benefit, so may we all know happiness. I do. Do you believe me?

ISAAC (*Sitting down, disconsolate*): I do. I know what you will say. I half wish I could take it all in—

MRS. RUBIN (*Eagerly*): Yes, yes. Listen, do . . . Long, long ago in the times of Abraham, when the world was still young, Abraham had a son. The son's name, like yours, was Isaac. (*ISAAC nods, as if to assure her of his attention.*) You remember the tale? And do you remember how Abraham feared lest Isaac should marry the daughter of a heathen family? (*ISAAC nods.*) Even so do I tremble for you. Even so do I say to you, as Abraham said to Eliazer, 'Thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred,' when you go to choose a wife. (*Towards the end her voice falters.*)

ISAAC (*Determined to make a desperate effort*): That was long ago, mother. They were all for themselves, then. The world has grown since. We are all brothers and sisters alike, one in the eyes of God.

MRS. RUBIN: Isaac, you are putting blasphemy and irreligion into well-sounding words.

ISAAC: Is it not true?

MRS. RUBIN: Isaac, is the world so small that all the Jewish girls from whom you might have chosen a wife have been already taken?

ISAAC: Would it were a matter of my choice. What we can choose we can reject.

MRS. RUBIN: Do you mean you have yielded to a mere infatuation over which you have no power?

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ISAAC (*Gently*): Mother, don't aggravate my sorrow. If it were mere infatuation could I look on your tears and hesitate?

MRS. RUBIN: O, Heaven! This is a punishment for his unorthodox beliefs! Tell me, Isaac, can you not be moved? Think what it means. Think.

ISAAC (*Rises, paces up and down*): Oh, God! I have thought and thought. . . . But it isn't thinking when you come back to the same point from which you started. . . .

MRS. RUBIN: You brought it on yourself, son.

ISAAC: That kind of talk, mother, can only add to my misery.

MRS. RUBIN (*Entreating*): Then leave her, leave her, for the sake of all of us. Come, Isaac, it is hard I know, but to continue is madness. Time will wear away that sorrow, as it does all others.

ISAAC: You don't know what you ask.

MRS. RUBIN: It's a sin to discuss it. Marry a Gentile! Listen, Isaac, Isaac, for Heaven's sake consider what you are doing! I am an old woman. I can't stand scenes like this. I ask you with all my strength, what little there is left of it, to give up this woman. Rather not marry at all. Tell me, are— (*She staggers to a chair, overcome with emotion. ISAAC rushes to her, and supports her.*)

ISAAC: Mother, mother, I take back all I've said. Everything shall be as you wish it. Mother, say something. (*Mrs. RUBIN is ghastly pale. Her color slowly returns.*)

MRS. RUBIN: Isaac, my life is in your hands. I beg you, for the last time, give up that woman.

ISAAC (*Brokenly*): But tell me, we can at least remain friends, this girl and I, we—

MRS. RUBIN: No, no, I'll not hear of it. You are merely courting disaster. Come, my boy, be brave. You must never see her again. You are through with her forever!

ISAAC: Forever? That is a hard word, mother.

MRS. RUBIN: It must be so. Decide between that woman and my life. I am trying to keep calm, Isaac, but if you could hear how it storms inside here (*Points to her heart.*) — if my son marries a woman outside his faith it will be at the cost of his mother's life. I can say no more.

ISAAC (*In a choked voice*): Mother, it shall be as you say. I am through with her, forever, for-ever. (*Speaks as if in a dream.*)

MRS. RUBIN: O, Heaven repay you for the happiness your words have brought me. Can I trust you, Isaac? Can I trust you? (*He nods assent, absently.*) Come to me child, you have made me happy again. (*During the ensuing speech, ISAAC seems utterly dazed.*) Now, Isaac, things will go well again in the house. An end to all our tears and differences. Listen, Isaac, why can't you be like Joseph, at least a little. The boy is a year older than you, yet he is still free from thoughts of girls. He attends regularly to business. See how steady

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he is in his habits. Look up to him, Isaac. He is free from your modern ideas; he has his faults, I know, but we all have. See, tonight, because you were late for supper he was so hungry that he ate without waiting to say grace. That was, after all, your fault—but we won't think of such things now. . . . I am tired. . . . There is supper on the table. Eat, Isaac, eat and forget. (*She goes out, wearily.*)

ISAAC (*Sits at table*): Eat, and forget. (*Cannot eat. Paces nervously up and down the room.* JOSEPH enters. *He looks at Isaac sneeringly.*)

JOSEPH: So you came home at last. Well, I hope you had a pleasant time.

ISAAC (*After a silence*): What is that to you, may I ask?

JOSEPH: Get off your high horse. You're home, now, you know, not in public.

ISAAC (*Softly*): I'll settle with you some other time. At present mother has just gone to bed. She's tired. I'd rather not disturb her.

JOSEPH (*As loudly as before*): You'd rather not disturb her, eh? Then you might have come home an hour earlier, as soon as you were through with work, and you'd have prevented a good deal more disturbance than you saw!

ISAAC: Speak lower, I tell you. Let the poor woman sleep. That's the important thing now.

JOSEPH: So careful he's getting to be in regard to his mother! A dutiful son, indeed! Let me tell you, if you wanted that woman to have her peace of mind you'd go to the synagogue a little more often, and stop going with Gentile—

ISAAC: Hold your tongue, I say!

JOSEPH: For whom? For you?

ISAAC: Where were you tonight?

JOSEPH: None of your business.

ISAAC: You were not at the synagogue.

JOSEPH (*Defiantly*): I was!

ISAAC: You are a liar!

JOSEPH: Be careful what you say!

ISAAC: I know what I'm talking about! I was at the synagogue tonight. I've been there regularly every Friday night for the past several months, not because I believe in it. You know I don't. But just to please mother. You haven't been there a single time, you hypocrite. And you have the gall to blacken my name in this house with lies that you knew I didn't dare to answer in front of our weak mother.

JOSEPH: Hold your tongue, I tell you, or there'll be trouble!

ISAAC: I'll speak every word I have on my mind, I say, and if you make a move to leave this room, there'll be war, I tell you, war!

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*(Speaking very softly, but coming up close to JOSEPH, who is scared by ISAAC's attitude. The dialogue that follows is carried on in subdued, but tense tones.)*

JOSEPH (*Intimidated*): Don't start anything now, or mother'll get up and there'll be the devil to pay!

ISAAC (*Fiercely*): Oh! It's you who are getting so solicitous about mother now, is it?

JOSEPH: See here, boy. Quit all this nonsense. We know each other pretty well. I've been playing my little game, I'll admit, just as you've been playing yours. So we're both even. I know your game. You know mine. (*Adopting a conciliatory tone.*) What's the use of all this noise and stuff? Isn't that fair?

ISAAC: You low down tramp! (*JOSEPH loses courage; he attempts to run out of the room, but ISAAC intercepts him.*) Stay right where you are, you low-life. I'll —

JOSEPH: Quit that, now, quit that, or I'll raise a row that'll wake mother up in a hurry!

ISAAC (*Menacingly*): You don't dare. You're a coward in addition to all your other virtues. Sit down. . . . Sit down, I say! (*JOSEPH takes a seat at the table.*) Now answer me. Remember I'm not to be trifled with. This is serious business with me!

JOSEPH (*Feigning boldness*): Go on with your little joke, but get through in a hurry. I want to go out yet tonight.

ISAAC: You're not going out tonight.

JOSEPH (*Rising*): You've got the gall to forbid me to —

ISAAC (*Peremptorily*): Sit down! I command it! And if you raise your voice above a whisper, there'll be things happening, do your hear! . . . Now then, tell me what business you had to tell mother about my affair with Anna!

JOSEPH: Do you mean to say she should have been left ignorant of it?

ISAAC: That's not the question. When the time came I could tell her.

JOSEPH: Sure! When it was too late!

ISAAC: What do you mean, too late?

JOSEPH: What I say. When you would already have married her.

ISAAC: That was my business, not yours! Why did you tell her?

JOSEPH: You know why. I've told you already.

ISAAC: You haven't.

JOSEPH: I say I have.

ISAAC: I say you haven't, and I know what I'm talking about. I know what you've been up to these past few weeks. Now come right out with it, or it will be the worse for you. (*His voice and that of JOSEPH, gradually rise during the ensuing quarrel.*)

JOSEPH: See here, how much longer do you think I'm going to

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put up with you cross-examination? I'll continue this farce when I have time. (Rises.)

ISAAC (*Taking a pistol from his right pocket. JOSEPH sees it and is terror-stricken. He falls into his chair*): Don't you dare to move.

JOSEPH: Put that up, Isaac, for God's sake. You're taking things too seriously. What is it about, after all? Remember she's only a Gentile.

ISAAC: Is that any reason for you to have told mother? To have wrecked my one chance of happiness? To go, like a sneak, and try to corrupt her! (*Overcome with the rage that he has been choking back all evening.*) You dirty cur, you! To try to corrupt her while pretending to favor her—to demand your selfish pleasure from her because you thought you held the key to our marriage by your silence!

JOSEPH (*In terror*): Put that weapon up, I tell you!

ISAAC (*Beyond control*): You thought she'd be easy prey for your lust, did you? You threatened to tell mother all when she refused your miserable request, did you? You—

MRS. RUBIN (*She has been aroused by the noise, and enters excitedly*): Good Heavens! What is going on here?

ISAAC (*Pointing at JOSEPH with the pistol*): Look at him there, look well at your better son, at him that you set up as my model!

(MRS. RUBIN *sees the revolver and shrieks*.)

MRS. RUBIN: Isaac, Isaac, you are mad! Throw that away this instant! What did you promise me? Isaac, this will kill me!

ISAAC: Take a good look at your son there. He told you I loved a Gentile. I did, God forgive me, and I do, I do! But he, the cur, he lusted after her. He tried to flatter her, cajole her, threaten her with telling our plans to you. He thought she would yield to him, bribe him with her person! (*Crouching up to JOSEPH*.) Come, don't hide your face. Stand up straight, let us see the holy man, the model for religious youth!

JOSEPH: Mother, mother, take him away from here. He will kill us both! (MRS. RUBIN *wails*.)

ISAAC (*Beyond control*): You low-life, you are to crawl before Anna on your knees and crave her pardon for your insults, do you understand? (*ISAAC gradually reveals his derangement.*) You are to tell her what a cur you are, that—

MRS. RUBIN (*Attempting to grasp the revolver*): Isaac, is this the way you keep your word? Is this—

ISAAC: Joseph and I will settle this together. . . . You are tired, mother, see how dark your eyes are under the lashes. . . . (*His looks wander, his actions are irresponsible, but at each attempt of JOSEPH to escape from the room he levels the revolver at JOSEPH's head. JOSEPH succeeds in maneuvering behind his mother. ISAAC, about to fire, stops.*)

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MRS. RUBIN: By the soul of your father, Isaac, consider what you are doing!

ISAAC: Mother, step aside from him, or I turn this revolver on myself!

MRS. RUBIN: Good God! (*She becomes faint and falls into a chair.*)

ISAAC (*To JOSEPH*): Tell her the whole story — the truth about your own black self. (*To MRS. RUBIN.*) Mother, Joseph has something to tell you.

JOSEPH: For God's sake, Isaac, is it not enough? (*ISAAC looks at him implacably.*) Mother, (*Whispering.*) he is off his mind, I'll do it to humor him. (*Aloud.*) Mother, I want to beg Isaac's pardon for having been base and unworthy. (*ISAAC nods.*) I — I — went to his — his — woman (*ISAAC steps forward ominously.*) his sweetheart — and tried to — to —

ISAAC (*Sternly*): To corrupt her —

JOSEPH (*Stammering from fear*): To corrupt her, and —

MRS. RUBIN: What is this I hear, God in Heaven!

JOSEPH: — And when she refused, I — I — (*He hesitates, but ISAAC's menacing attitude prods him on.*) carried out my threat to let you know of their affair, and — and —

MRS. RUBIN (*Stopping her ears*): This is what comes of going astray! Isaac! What is your grievance? Speak! Anything but stand there, with wild eyes, and a weapon of death in your hands!

JOSEPH (*Rushing on ISAAC*): Give me that gun! (*There is a scuffle, the mother looking on in horror.* MRS. RUBIN screams for help. *The candles on the table are knocked over, chairs are upset.* JOSEPH has by this time grasped the weapon. *He rushes back, aiming at ISAAC.* MRS. RUBIN, believing ISAAC still in possession of the weapon, rushes towards him, coming between JOSEPH and ISAAC. *She receives the shot intended for ISAAC, and falls dead on the floor.*)

ISAAC: Mother!

JOSEPH: Good God! I have killed her! (*Throws the gun to one side and kneels down.*)

ISAAC (*Falling over the dead body*): Mother! Mother! Why wasn't it I? Why wasn't it I!

QUICK CURTAIN.

# Etchings

By CLARENCE STRATTON

## I

### THE WITCH OF OLD ROUEN

#### I DREAMED.

I strolled along a narrow street in old Rouen in the full glare of the noonday sun. There was the silence of death in the air. Suddenly a door flew open, a man drew out a young girl by the hair. She tore herself free. She clutched at the ground, she grasped a stone, she raised it; there was a cry and the man sank down in the road. A score of people rushed out and surrounded the stupefied girl. Villainous men leered at her, old hags threatened her, and called her "witch" and "sorceress" for she was fair and beautiful. And some one cried, "To the priest for trial," and they hurried her away, and I was alone again.

I heard her accused. I sat on the ground at the feet of her judges. The trial had lasted all day and now the place was lighted with torches. The jury of priests had not retired. The Bishop rose and read the charge. The sentence was "Death." And he said to the jury:

"And let him that is without sin among you, cast the first stone."

Then each priest cast at her a burning brand, and as his torch flared up and then died out on the ground, each man shrieked, "Witch."

And the girl clad in pure white, stood as one in a trance, and heeded nothing. With solemn tread the executioner stepped into the lighted circle before the condemned. As the masked figure in black held out the clanking chains to bind her wrists, the girl awoke. With a terrible cry, she covered her eyes with her hands, then fell like a corpse. Two mumbling priests raised her form, and the chains were clamped on. Then she was carried out; the lights disappeared.

I sat alone in the dark wing of the cathedral. The nave was filled with a crowd of stern faced, expectant men and women. The priests moved silently about the brightly lighted sanctuary. The center doors swung back with a harsh groan, and every head was turned.

First appeared the cross and the candles; then a band of chanting Capuchins, and then the witch. Suffering had made her even more beautiful. Her luxuriant hair was loose and fell over her pure white robe. Her large dark eyes and the hollows under them heightened the ivory whiteness of her skin. She saw nothing. Her manacled hands were clasped over her breast, her head was thrown back; she walked slowly up the aisle. They were bringing her into church before taking her to the stake.

A murmur of admiration and surprise arose, but it was drowned by a growl of hate, which surged above the monotonous chanting of the priests.

I had not the heart to assist at such a spectacle. With another look at that beautiful face, I made my way out into the cool night air and the darkness.

## II

### THE KING'S WIFE

The King was happy in his handsome wife. But there were whisperings in the court, shakings of heads in corners, intelligent meaning glances exchanged at audiences, fingers on mouths, pursing of lips, and raising of eyebrows. Meanwhile the King and Queen feasted, and hunted, followed the measure, or flew the falcon. And Duke Alva was happy, also, for the King was his friend,—and the Queen was beautiful, and gracious as well.

Then the King felt the difference, but he would not be convinced. He wanted not to know. He was happy even in his deception. Why not be happy if he could? If he knew nothing, he need nothing do. But were he certain, then it meant death for three, for he could not, would not survive the shame.

So the court was serene. But so also is the sky from which the deadly thunderbolt falls, killing gentle sheep and kindly shepherd, rending trees and cleaving the earth.

The King gently parted the curtains to his Queen's most private apartment. He saw the Queen bent low over a table with a single candle. He did not see what she pressed against her lips. Quietly, so quietly the King tip-toed in. No robes of state rustled to announce his coming. And the Queen was too intent to hear. How beautiful, how girlish, how debonair she was! The King caught the spirit of her youth, of her freshness, and blindfolded her eyes with his hands.

The Queen laughed a low happy laugh. She stroked his hands lovingly. Then she said, "Cease, Duke, it is too much."

And the King tottered from the room.

### III

#### A PRAYER IN THE DESERT

The sinking sun was throwing level rays across the plain, but no shadows fell on the desert save the skeleton forms of the two desperate prospectors. They were lost on the burning sands,—no bushes or trees made shade at noon, no water flowed to ease their burning heads and necks, to moisten their parched lips and strained throats. That morning their horses had died, but they had struggled on through the day hoping to reach the hills they knew must be somewhere in the west. And now it was twilight, and almost as quickly, dark.

The tall man threw himself on his face. The youth lay beside him.

"I'm done, we can't get out of this. What makes you think we can?"

The young man's hand clutched something at his breast.

"Because, back home, there's a girl who's praying for me. When she kissed me goodbye she gave me her picture and said she would pray for me every night. I know we'll get out of this, and that's the reason. And to-night, I'm going to try to pray, too!"

And into the silence of the night, straight up to the stars,

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he prayed. His companion had fallen asleep, but for a long time the youth gazed up at the stars, the same stars, that she was watching and praying for.

Next morning a party of prospectors awakened the tall man. As he opened his heavy eyes and saw the ponies, the men, tears streamed down his face. He rolled over, and laying his hand caressingly on the youth's shoulder, said, "You were right, Kid, we're out of it. And the prayer did it."

Then he drew back stupefied. For the face was cold and the wide open eyes were staring up into the Heavens.

## Three Trials

BY HENRY T. SCHNITTKIND

**A**T the news that three interesting cases were about to be tried at the Celestial Supreme Court, the audience stood up in a body and stretched their immortal legs. Not for years had a really good or really bad soul come up for trial. Petty souls, with petty sins and virtues, there were in hordes; souls of bards and burglars and grocers and statesmen had come and gone; millions of those uninteresting souls had been condemned to the regions where nothing either of a joyful or a painful nature ever happens. It was therefore welcome news to the audience to hear that the monotony was about to be broken. The souls of the ladies went into the retiring room where they primped up their white wings and touched up their deathless lips with immortal rouge, so as to look their blessed prettiest at the coming trials. The souls of the men took on new vigor as they puffed away at their quenchless cigars and expectorated into golden cupidors that were forever becoming automatically empty. The souls of the girls stuck their spiritual gum under their diamond-studded seats and stopped whispering about the lovely tenor voices of the he-angels. All became quiet with eager anticipation, and the clerk announced the arrival of the first of the three interesting souls.

On earth this soul had belonged to the greatest financier in America. Starting, naturally, as all good financiers start, as a bootblack, this man had become the leading spirit in American business. At his nod, mountainous fortunes had crumbled into dust, and at his command entire nations had been made or unmade. To withstand this man's will, it had meant death to the fool who dared it, and to be favored with his smile, millions of people had been ready to sell their very souls.

Conscious of his earthly power, and confident of his heavenly reward, the soul of the financier stalked haughtily into the court room, and the audience gasped with admiration. When called

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to the witness stand, he looked about him with a faint smile of contempt. No court on earth had ever tripped him, and he would not let this heavenly court bulldoze him into submission.

Even the Prosecuting Attorney trembled as he asked in a timid voice:

“What have you done to deserve Heaven?”

“What have I done to deserve Heaven?” His voice was paternal, indulgent, as though he were speaking to an angry child. “I have found deserts and peopled them with cities. I have cut through impassable mountains, joining the hitherto disconnected ends of the earth. Out of nothing I have created everything. Starting without a cent, I have heaped up more wealth than has ever been amassed by any human being. I have shown to others the vast possibilities of sheer grit and ambition. Through my almost superhuman aims and well-nigh incredulous attainments I am the one great inspiration to all the children of men, both present and to come.”

“Yes,” objected the Prosecuting Attorney, yet with no conviction in his tone, “this is all very well. But, in attaining your ambition and in overcoming your obstacles, were you not . . . er—er . . . rather . . . ahem . . . careless as to the means you employed?”

“Great ends justify all means.”

“Very true,” replied the Prosecuting Attorney. “Yet in the course of your career you must have crushed the hopes of hundreds of widows and maimed the lives of thousands of orphans. Of course,” he added hastily, “it was really not your personal responsibility, for the masters of great achievements in business do not, and should not, regard life sentimentally.”

“Quite right. It was often held against me that I was unscrupulous, that I brought misery upon individuals and war and devastation upon entire countries. But people failed to understand that in realizing colossal ambitions human lives are secondary. Is the hurricane to blame for overwhelming villages that happen to stand in its path? Is the avalanche to be censured for whirling to destruction the human fools who try to reach heights beyond their strength? My career was as inevitable as the hurricane, as impersonal as the avalanche. Once

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my course was determined, it was no concern of mine who or what happened to be swept along."

"In other words," went on the Prosecuting Attorney, "your brain was superhuman, whereas your . . . ahem . . . heart . . . er—r . . ."

"Heart!" cried the financier. "That is a sentimental word for ninnies and little girls; but for men who conquer worlds, this word does not, and should not, exist!"

"I am done," said the Prosecuting Attorney, and sat down abashed.

The financier stood up to receive his sentence, while the immortal audience looked at him in reverential awe.

"Your reward," came the sweet tones of the Great Judge, "shall be this: Throughout your eternal life you shall always be given superhuman obstacles to conquer, just as you have done on earth, and you shall always succeed in conquering them despite all that will obstruct your path."

"This," cried the financier in ecstasy, "is truly Heaven. Nothing can be more glorious than this. Wonderful is Thy Judgment, O Great Judge!"

"Your life here," continued the Judge, "will be an eternal fulfillment of the mighty things you have undertaken on earth. There will be but one difference. There below you were insensible to the woes your works inflicted upon others. Here, however, your omniscience will compel you to feel eternally every pang of misery that your conquering career will inflict upon your fellows."

"But," murmured the financier horror-stricken, "this is not reward, but punishment."

"In Heaven," said the Great Judge softly, "punishment and reward have the same meaning."

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The second case was announced. The soul that was to be tried now was that of a man who had led an ascetic life, always starving himself and denying himself all bodily pleasures. "This soul," said the Prosecuting Attorney to himself, "will surely be granted eternal Paradise." And timidly he began to question him.

“Have you ever cheated your neighbor?”

“No.”

“Have you ever missed church on Sunday?”

“Not unless I was sick.”

“Have you ever eaten or drunk to excess?”

“Never.”

“Did you leave any debts unpaid when you died?”

“No, I always paid my debts when they were due.”

“Have you ever spoken an unkind word to others?”

“Never knowingly,” replied the soul of the ascetic, “for

I have always made it a plan in life to be honest and kind in all my dealings. Often have I been reviled, sometimes beaten, but always have I returned good for evil. I have kept the injunctions of the Lord to the letter. There were times when through slandering my superiors I could have taken their place in society, gaining wealth and fame for myself. But I have always refrained from it, so that I died poor and unknown. Many a time, when I was hungry myself, I shared my last piece of bread with others who were hungry.”

“Did you never crave for the good things of the earth?”

The ascetic’s eyes were filled with longing, and his words came impetuously.

“Oh, how I wanted those things!” he cried. “When I sat in my poor, tumble-down shanty, hungry and alone, I could see my wealthy neighbors just across the street eating and drinking to their heart’s content. At times my temptations were almost beyond mortal endurance. But I stifled them. When I was young, I often felt the urge of life rushing through my veins, calling me to the pleasures of youth. I saw beautiful women, and the pain of it was unbearable, for I had to shut my eyes to their beckoning loveliness. My friends often held the sparkling wine cup to my lips, and I could see reflected in it flaming joys and golden cities with their alluring delights. But I always dashed the cup from my lips. And as I grew older, and those pleasures could no longer be mine for the asking, I began to feel a void in my life, for I had never lived, I had never slaked the feverish thirst in my blood, I had always stifled the constant cry in my veins to live and and to love!

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"And later, when my passions slowly subsided, and my friends departed, I still kept on curbing my desire for earthly happiness, though no one ever could guess what torture, what torture this cost me! I became a mere shell of a man hiding a swarm of unfulfilled yearnings. Thus I finally went into my grave with the weight of a wasted life behind me, but with one great hope still bearing me up in my vow of renunciation."

"And what was that one great hope?"

"I believed that those who gave vent to their desires on earth would suffer eternal damnation in the eternal world. Hence I denied myself, ready to forego all my earthly happiness, with the hope of eternal fulfillment of those same desires that I have stifled in my temporary life on earth."

"Your reward in Heaven," said the Great Judge, "shall be eternal desire such as you have stifled there below."

"With eternal fulfillment of that desire!" cried the ascetic joyfully.

"With eternal inability to fulfill it. This is the reward of those who crush their base appetites on earth with the hope of satiating them in Heaven."

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Now came the third case. It was a ragged, lame, bleeding soul with a hang-dog expression on his face.

"What have you to say for yourself?" asked the Prosecuting Attorney.

"Nothing," said the ragged soul in a timid voice.

"Have you done anything to deserve Heaven?" continued the Prosecuting Attorney.

"I don't know," said the soul.

"You don't look as though you gained much respect from your fellow creatures, do you?"

The ragged soul hung his head in shame, but made no reply.

"You look so poor, so unambitious," said the Prosecuting Attorney. "What did you ever do for an honest living?"

"Odd jobs, whenever I could get them," said the soul.

"In other words," sneered the Prosecuting Attorney, "you were a shiftless, good-for-nothing lazy fellow, with no steady job and no ambition to get one."

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Again the ragged soul hung his head in shame. His case looked black indeed.

"I have nothing further to say," wound up the Prosecuting Attorney. "His guilty attitude and his disreputable appearance condemn him far more conclusively than anything I could say. Dixi."

"I would like to ask you a few questions," said the Advocate to the ragged soul. "Have you ever done a kind deed to any one?"

"Not that I am aware of."

"How is that? Didn't you always give away everything, even to your last crumb of bread, to others?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, don't you think that those were good deeds?"

"I don't know," said the ragged soul. "I didn't give those because I thought I was doing a good deed, but because I just couldn't help it."

"What do you mean?" asked the Advocate.

"I am afraid I can't explain it," said the ragged soul. "I gave because, when I saw a hungry person, something came over me that just made me do it. I couldn't resist that feeling, to save my life."

"Don't you think you deserve credit for it?" asked the Advocate.

"Why, I never looked at it in that light," said the ragged soul.

"But didn't people ever give you credit for being so charitable?" insisted the Advocate.

"No," answered the ragged soul.

"Why?" asked the Advocate.

"Well," said the ragged soul apologetically, "it was such a little thing to make a fuss over, that nobody ever knew about what I did. And besides . . ."

"But the people to whom you gave," interrupted the Advocate, "surely *they* knew."

"I always managed to give," said the ragged soul, "without letting them know who it was that gave, for it was such a silly thing to bother about."

"But now and then," insisted the Advocate, "one or two people must have found out that they were indebted to you?"

"Yes, I suppose so."

"Well, and what attitude did they have toward you?"

Hereupon the ragged soul smiled sadly, but said nothing in reply.

"Won't you please tell me?" urged the Advocate gently. But the ragged soul was still silent.

"Well, then," said the Advocate impatiently, somewhat offended at his client's stubbornness, "let us change the subject. Suppose you tell us why your feet are so swollen?"

"Oh, it's nothing," replied the ragged soul. "A cripple once lost his way and I carried him a couple of miles over the mountains."

"A couple of miles?" said the Advocate. "Was it only a couple of miles?"

"Why, yes," said the ragged soul, "it was only about fifteen or so."

"But why are your feet bleeding?" asked the Advocate.

"Oh, I didn't have any shoes then. I walked barefoot, and the ground was a trifle rough. But why do you make me tell you all this? It was such an insignificant thing."

"I want to know why you didn't have any shoes at that time," broke in the Prosecuting Attorney.

"I had given them away to a man who needed them."

"And now," continued the Advocate, "tell us why you are limping. Were you born lame, and if not, how did you become so?"

Hereupon the ragged soul laughed aloud. "Must I tell you everything?"

"Yes," said the Advocate.

"Very well, then. When I gave the shoes to that man, he said they were too clumsy, and he hit me in the hip with a stone, and this must have cracked a bone in my leg. But still, that did not bother me much."

"And right after that you carried the cripple over the mountains!"

"Why not?"

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The Advocate turned away for an instant and covered his face with his hand. The audience could not make out whether he was trying to conceal a smile or to brush away a tear.

"And now," said the Advocate, "I would like to know how you died!"

"I'd rather not tell," said the ragged soul.

"But I insist," said the Advocate.

"I fell down and got killed."

"How did it happen?"

"When I set the cripple down in the snow . . ."

"Do you mean to say," cried the Advocate, "that you walked barefoot all that distance in the snow, with the cripple on your back?"

"Why that's nothing, is it? As I was saying, I set him down in the snow, and tried to sit down myself, for I was a trifle tired, and my lame foot was bothering me just a wee bit. But just then I slipped on the ice accidentally . . ."

"You slipped accidentally?" asked the Advocate.

"Yes," said the ragged soul, "that is, the cripple pushed me. I fell over the precipice and here I am."

Hereupon the Prosecuting Attorney stood up and said, "Now I would like to ask you one or two further questions."

"Proceed," replied the Great Judge.

"I would like to know," said the Prosecuting Attorney, "why it is that the man to whom you gave your shoes threw a stone at you, and the cripple whom you carried across the mountains pushed you over the precipice?"

"I don't know why it was," smiled the ragged soul, "but I found that people generally acted like that. And it always puzzled me, too. Can you explain it?"

"Perhaps," said the Advocate, "not being used to that sort of treatment, those people were suspicious of you?"

"I don't know," said the ragged soul, "and I really don't care."

"Now, the other question I want to ask," said the Prosecuting Attorney, "is this. Why did you refuse to answer the Advocate when he asked you how you were repaid by those people who found out that you had done them a kindness?"

"I didn't answer," said the ragged soul, "because there was nothing to say."

"But I insist on your telling me," stormed the Prosecuting Attorney.

In answer the ragged soul laughed heartily, and the Prosecuting Attorney noticed that several of his front teeth were missing.

"How did you lose those teeth?" he cried furiously, trying to trap the ragged soul into an admission of some sin that he had committed.

"Oh, said the ragged soul simply, "they were knocked out by a man whom I tried to comfort in misery."

"That's all," said the Prosecuting Attorney, and sat down.

And now the Advocate stood up and made his plea for the ragged soul. There was really no need of it; for as soon as the testimony was over, the Great Judge beamed kindly upon this soul, murmuring, "My child, my beloved child." When the Advocate was done, the Prosecuting Attorney was asked if he had anything to say.

"Yes," he replied. "I have this to say. I have never yet, in all my eternal career, heard of a case like this. There have been plenty of people who have lived for others in order that they might win fame for their actions. There have been a few who have died for others in order that they might attain everlasting glory for their sacrifice. But this is the first case of a man who has lived for others with no desire for fame and who has died for others with no hope of glory. I therefore believe that he is crazy and should be consigned to the lunatic ward of Hell."

The Prosecuting Attorney sat down amidst the applause of the audience.

"My child," said the Great Judge, "your work among men has been such that it is not for me to pass judgment upon you. Heaven, with all that it contains, is yours. Choose whatsoever you will. You shall have all that your heart desires."

For a moment the ragged soul was bewildered, and the audience waited tensely to hear what would be the choice of him who could have all Heaven for the asking.

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“Great Judge,” said the ragged soul fervently, as his eyes filled with tears, “if it really is mine to decide my own fate, then I beg of you that you send me back to earth to work once more for others.”

“And to gain fame through your work this time!” asked the Advocate.

“No,” said the ragged soul, “for then all the joy of working would be lost.”

“But in that case,” said the Advocate, “you will again be compelled to die for doing kind deeds.”

“That,” said the ragged soul, “is precisely my prayer.”

When the ragged soul said this, even the Advocate snickered, and the audience of angels rose from their seats in an uproar of laughter.

## Views and Reviews

BY ISAAC GOLDBERG

### VICENTE BLASCO IBANEZ

Of the two latest books by the noted Spanish novelist, Blasco Ibanez, one is already in English and the other doubtless will soon appear, unless a sudden shifting or end of the war results in a lowering of public interest in the submarine. "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" (E. P. Dutton & Co.) has been rendered into rapidly moving English by Charlotte Brewster Jordan, and should prove of particular interest to those who desire, in their war fiction, to see war as it is and not as many poets have imagined it. Ibanez is a literary child of Zola and a lover of France. Hence his tribute, in this book, to the spirit of that nation as exemplified at the battle of the Marne, and to the spirit of that writer as revealed in descriptions that do something more than describe. The Spaniard's later works, such as the present book and the "Mare Nostrum" that followed it, show a tendency to allow his work to be hurt by his intense desire to write artistic propaganda for the Allies. The earlier Ibanez—he of "The Cabin," for instance (recently published by Knopf)—is a writer deeply sensitive to region and atmosphere as affecting character and action. That Ibanez is the better of the two. Yet in his latest work there is the fire of an ardent purpose, and pages of description that easily rank not only with his best, but with the best that has been produced by any writer in recent years. This

novelist, together with several other of his compatriots, should be known better in the United States. Indeed, we need a wider knowledge of foreign novelists in general, if only as a corrective for much of the namby-pamby writing that our own authors are content to supply us with. Several of Ibanez's earlier works were done into English some time ago,—such books as "The Shadow of the Cathedral" and "Sonnica." There is a hopeful sign that publishers are going to let us have more Spanish novels and plays, as witness Scribner's bringing out of a selection of Benavente's works, excellently translated by John Garrett Underhill, representative of the Society of Spanish Authors in this country and Canada. Of Benavente more anon, as he is the greatest of the Spanish dramatists, and according to some, the chief playwright now alive.

### THE ONE-ACT PLAY

At last the one-act play seems to be coming into its own in this country. Abroad it has long enjoyed an appreciable place, not only in the hearts of the readers, but also upon the vivifying boards of the stage. A sure sign that it has "arrived" in these United States is the appearance of a university text-book upon the subject. (*The Technique of the One-Act Play*, by Prof. B. Roland Lewis, Luce & Co.) Professor Lewis treats the one-act play from every possible angle, is very prac-

tical in his suggestions, since they are the result of actual experience in classes, and makes constant reference to well-known examples. His book contains, also, a long list of one-act plays which forms an excellent basis for further study and for the testing of the helpful maxims laid down in the course of the book. The one-act play, Lewis insists, is not merely a play in one act; it has laws and a technique, all its own; it must, above all, aim to produce singleness of impression. Just how this may be achieved is the main purpose of the book to teach. The volume is a pioneer work, and should be known by all who write or read this delightful form of the drama.

Incidentally, there have lately been published not a few plays in this form that are of added use in applying the lessons offered by Lewis's book. The Flying Stag Plays, issued by *Egmont Arens, New York*, thus far comprise the following five one-act plays:

“The Sandbar Queen,” by George Cronyn.

“Night,” by James Oppenheim.

“The Angel Intrudes,” by Floyd Dell.

“Enter the Hero,” by Theresa Helburn.

“Two Blind Beggars and One Less Blind,” by Philip Moeller.

Of these the most substantial is the first. Not only is it thoroughly dramatic in conception and execution, but it is, to us of the city, not a little exotic in atmosphere, and certainly significant in theme. All of us saints have more or less of the sinner beneath us, and whether we would yield to the proper Sandbar Queen under the circumstances can never be answered until we face the conditions.

There is some good poetry in the second play, and presentation by means of silhouettes doubtless adds much to the mere printed word. Number three is an amusing, if trite, piece of cynicism. The fourth, with the first, shares psychological significance and dramatic substance. Where the first is exotic in atmosphere, this play is exotic in mentality, so to speak. The figure of the woman who writes love letters to herself, and the manner in which her strange weakness is exposed, make good acting material and reading as well. Moeller's symbolic episode is well imagined.

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#### THE RUSSIAN STAGE

Mr. Bakshy's collection of essays on “The Path of the Modern Russian Stage” (*Luce & Co.*) forms a book of fresh outlook. It approaches the question from the standpoint of psychological investigation, and has much that is new to say in regard to the Moscow Art Theatre; the various Russian schools of staging, as exemplified in Meyerhold, Stanislavski and others; the origin and development of the Slav drama; the artistic possibilities of the kinematograph; the logical application of Gordon Craig's theories, and so on. Bakshy enunciates an attitude toward art in general that makes his book valuable, even if it did not contain a dozen other significant points of view. To him there is no single standard of art; rather than looking upon the various movements as antagonistic, he sees them as complementary in nature, and believes that each, in the long run, contributes its bit to the Ideal theatre of the future.

ROMAGNOLI AND THE NEW  
PHILOLOGY

To Italian students of the classics,—those who do not believe that to study the classics one must necessarily bury himself and forget contemporary problems—the name of Ettore Romagnoli is synonymous with a most agreeably modern outlook upon things ancient. Romagnoli has a conception of philology that rescues it from the intellectual monstrosity that late German scholarship has made of it, and restores it to its function as compiler and publisher of texts, rather than as universal archeologist, critic, numismatist, linguist, and what not. This view of his subject is given in a volume just published by *Nicolo Zanichelli* of Bologna, Italy. The philologist, is Romagnoli's claim, has long been, and in great measure still is, obsessed by the Teuton view of the science. The Italian does not deny the important work done by Germans for philology. That would be futile, and would be confuted by facts that every student knows. What he does inveigh against is the view initiated by Wolf and his followers,—that of turning philology into a vast encyclopedic, Titanic study which attempts to embrace everything at once, rather than leaving literature to men naturally gifted in that direction, archeology to persons with the archeological bent, linguistics to those gifted in that way, and so forth. In the same book Romagnoli, with documentary evidence, punctures some of the German pretensions to minute exactness. On the whole a book which teachers of the classics especially should feel obliged to read. The same may be said for Romagnoli's more recent volume

(published by the large firm of *Treves Brothers, Milan*), on "The Greek Theatre." It is a most delightful volume of original criticism and elucidation, containing scarcely a footnote (*mirabile dictu* when speaking of any work on the ancients!) and replete with human, as well as new, views of the great writers of tragedy and comedy. The volume is printed in exceptionally fine style, contains numerous illustrations from ancient vases, and is over four hundred pages long. An original piece of work, proving again that the classics have been long looked upon as dull only because the works upon them mirrored the dulness of those who wrote them. Or, as Romagnoli would probably agree, because they were written (in Teuton spirit) by men who were fitted to the students of the plays from an archeological standpoint, but not writers about them from a literary standpoint. The distinction is important, and illustrates the significance of Romagnoli's plea for a revaluation of philological values.

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OUR COLLEGE WRITERS

The anthology season is here. Soon we shall be regaled with the best tales of the year, the best poems, and the best of everything else. Newest in the anthology field will be the collection of the best college stories of the year soon to be issued by the *Stratford Company*, as an annual companion volume of the "Poets of the Future." Now that the crest of the war has been passed, and with the piping days of peace once more in sight, thanks to many of these college youths who gladly rushed to the colors, the *Stratford Company* is considering adding

another volume to its college series, to be called "The College Playwright." The college writer, indeed, has found in this company a staunch friend and supporter. In its annual anthologies he may read the best that his colleagues over the country are doing, and perhaps find a place himself in their pages. Such encouragement is just what is needed by the young writer, and gives him a ready introduction to the magazines and more serious journals. This year's anthology of the best college stories contains an Introduction by Edward J. O'Brien, the short-story expert. The editor of both this series and the poetry anthology is Dr. Henry T. Schnittkind, in whom the young writers of the nation have a sympathetic friend to whom many are thankful for their baptism of type.

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### "YOUNG" PORTUGAL'S POETS

The part played by poets in the revolution of thought that was at last greatly instrumental in bringing Portugal to the side of the Allies is more considerable than most people realize. Yet no less an authority than George Young, who has spent many years in that country in the diplomatic service of Great Britain, and who has done valuable pioneer work in bringing Portuguese history and poetry to the attention of the English-reading world, informs us that the poets of the nation have been no unimportant factor in the development of the country. The so-called "Coimbra school" of poets, indeed, has a direct connection with the revolution of 1910. Poets of the stamp of Antero de Quental (1842-1891) and Guerro Junqueiro appear not in the faint

light of mere versifying literary figures, but as genuine spokesmen of a new era. Junqueiro, indeed, is looked upon as the poet who sums up the highest national aspirations of the rejuvenated nation. Just how important Junqueiro is in this respect may be gathered from the fact that Young, in his "Portugal, Old and Young" (*Oxford Press*), devotes considerable space to the poets of the new school in general, and to Junqueiro in particular, going so far as to aver that in order to get the best possible idea of what Young Portugal means and intends to realize, nothing is better than a reading of Junqueiro's poems. "He was from the beginning of the reform movement accepted as its prophet, and, like the Hebrew prophets, whom he so much resembles in character and career, no less than in countenance, his indignation against oppression is often vindictive and occasionally only vituperative. . . . Wiser than Quental, he has taken no direct part in the political campaign, and the trumpet-blasts of his sonorous diatribes have been no longer heard since the walls of Jericho fell flat before them."

A typical instance of Junqueiro's style is afforded by an extract from his play, "Patria:"

New worlds I sought, new spaces  
broad and long,  
But not the more to worship and  
be wise.  
A cruel greed hurried my feet  
along;  
The pride of conquest made my  
sword-arm strong  
And lit the light of madness in  
my eyes.  
I shall not wash the blood I then  
did spill  
With tears of twice ten thousand  
centuries.

The accusation that Junqueiro thus hurled at certain elements in his own country seems today to have been written as the epitaph of the crumbling Hohenzollern dynasty. The ready entrance of Portugal upon the side of world-wide democracy was no little prepared by just such humane utterances of the national poet.

De Quental committed suicide as the result of political failure. His morbid tendencies and inevitable end were early forecasted. Junqueiro, born 1850, has been called the Portuguese Victor Hugo. "Not only does he represent the high-water mark of the tide of French romanticist and republican inspiration that intervened between the English ideals of the Constitutionalists and the Prussian ideals of a later régime, but his attack on the corruption of the later monarchy much resembles that of Victor Hugo on the Second Empire," writes Young in his all too short anthology of Portuguese poets.

Other names associated with the Young Portugal movement in poetry as well as in the more prosaic fields of statecraft are Theophile Braga, Sousa Viterbo and Bernardino Machado. Of these, the first and the last have been president of the nation, thus again emphasizing the close relationship in Portugal between poetry and national progress.

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LITERARY NOVELTIES  
FROM FRANCE

Among the books of more than passing value that have been received from French publishers are the following:

"Le Vendeur d'Huile et la Reine-de-Beauté," a charming adaptation of a Chinese classic by Pascal

Forthuny. (*Aibin Michel, Paris.*) This is not exactly a tale for Sunday school children, yet it is replete with grace, poetry, sophistication and romantic interest. M. Forthuny is doing much to make the Chinese novel known in France, and it is to be hoped that some of his skilful adaptations will find their way into English.

"L'Homme Qui Reveillent Les Morts," by C. de la Fouchardier et Rudolphe Bringer (*Michel.*) Did it ever strike you that a great man in one epoch might make a sorry showing of things if he were transported into a different age? Well, that is what "the man who wakes the dead" did with Napoleon, Rousseau and not a few other celebrities. And, as the publishers assure us, "the man who wakes the dead will not put the living to sleep!"

Of war books, the following are worth while perusing by those who are interested in something more than newspaper reports:

"Spectacles de Guerre," by Alexis Léaud. (*Armand Colin, Paris.*) These views are first hand ones, and cover actual sights in the trenches, the hospitals, the camp, the street,—all reported with a keen sense for psychological values.

"Au Pays de L'Epouvante," (*L'Arménie Martyre*), by Henry Barby. (*Michel.*) In this book the author does for stricken Armenia what he did in his previous book for Serbia. The volume is illustrated with numerous photographs taken by the author.

"L'Horreur Allemand," by Pierre Loti. (*Calmann-Levy, Paris.*) In this valuable account the famous French traveler and author utilizes the knowledge gained during two years service with the army of the East and of the North.

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# THE STRATFORD JOURNAL

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*AN INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE*

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# THE STRATFORD JOURNAL

NOVEMBER, NINETEEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTEEN

*The single fixed policy of the Stratford Journal is to endeavor to print the best in foreign and native literature. It is allied to no fad or cult and committed to no 'ology' or 'ism'. It welcomes the work of new writers particularly.*

## The Two Presidents

By JULES LEMAITRE

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY PAUL HOYSRADT

Note: "The supple irony of the great French critic, Jules Lemaître," declares *Je Sais Tout*, "played irreverently with a charm that excuses its audacity. On the margin of contemporary papers and old books he loved to sketch tales, the free interpretations of which reveal a delicious gleam of truth." The tale that follows—the last one from the pen of Lemaître—was first published in the pages of this Parisian monthly on April 15, 1918.

DURING the seven years that Durand had occupied the Palais de l'Élysée, his predecessor Dubois had born him nothing but ill-will. Dubois was truly unfortunate. Above his chagrin over his own dispossession, he felt that the position of an ex-President of the Republic was something anomalous, indefinable, without reason, unclassifiable, and dreadfully hard. An ex-President of the Republic is a monster socially. There is no place for him in the dinners or the ceremonies; he no longer has to preside over friendly banquets or the farmers' comitias. He is a bore even to himself. Driven back to private life, he there finds an absence of what he might have expected. On various occasions he is astonished to find his old friends actually daring to contradict him. As he is always aware of his own position, he lives in continual fear that others will be wanting in due respect for him. He has an equal horror of being recognized and remaining unknown on the streets or in the public places. He is distrustful, ill at ease, and boiling with bitterness.

During those seven years of his successor's administration Dubois never left off criticising Durand. He judged him incompetent, vainglorious, niggardly, pusillanimous, and no better than a clown in office; he treated him as a figure-head. He

upbraided him for lack of character. In short, Durand was disgusting for the reason that he was exactly what Dubois had been himself. But when the seventh year of Durand's term had expired and Depuis had been elected in his stead, Dubois was suddenly overwhelmed with sympathy for Durand. Thanks to Durand, he was no longer a phenomenon now — unclassifiable, solitary, and a butt for smiles. At least there would be two of the same species.

The day after Durand, the fallen, took possession of the apartment he had hired on the Avenue Rapp, Dubois called with an ingenuous face and with both hands outstretched in friendship.

"I was expecting you," said Durand.

And the two men embraced, smiling and weeping at the same time.

Dubois was a widower of several years standing. Durand followed suit only a short time after his retirement. That drew the two friends yet closer together in their freedom and added to the unity of their destinies.

Both lodged in the quarter of the Invalides. And they met every day in one of the little cafés that are still found on these broad avenues. The café reminded them of those others which they had so often frequented during their respective sub-prefectures and where they had founded their political fortunes in their early years.

Probably they were the only two citizens absolutely alike and of the same *genus* in France. They realized this themselves and revelled in the fact. And when they were alone by themselves, they would recall to each other what they had once been.

Together they would visit the café-concerts and the little theatres. They were forced to pay for their seats now at such places. And unembarrassed by the presence of a protocole, they actually enjoyed themselves — something they had never been able to do in the days when they themselves were on exhibition.

Before their presidencies they had traveled more or less, but during their actual administrations they had gone about

without seeing anything. They now found delight in visiting the cities where, once upon a time, one or the other had dedicated some public edifice or the statue of some republican hero. They traveled out through the country and suddenly awoke to its beauty and charm.

They exchanged reminiscences, opened up confidences, disclosed wonderful friendships, revealed personal correspondences with friendly, inoffensive sovereigns, and told of the marvelous economies they had brought to pass. Durand swore he had saved seven millions, but Dubois boasted of seven and a half. They showed each other the presents and decorations they had received. They had cupboards crowded with these. Durand lacked only the Order of the Golden Fleece, while Dubois needed but the Cross of Saint Andrew for a complete collection. As they fingered all those badges and orders and ribbons, there would come a sudden realization of the vanity and ridiculousness of such things.

One of their secret pleasures was to hold familiar chats with the common people and to reflect (as once upon a time M. de Chateaubriand reflected):

“Ah, if they only knew to whom they were speaking!”

They hardly left each other any longer. One evening, however, Dubois did not show himself at the little café. The next day he announced to Durand that he had found a charming lady-friend at whose home he intended thereafter to pass an hour before dinner. Durand’s disappointment was all too evident.

“All right, then. Come along with me,” Dubois exclaimed.

And thereupon the two friends agreed to enjoy by common right the conversation of the young lady.

They kept their real names and stations from her. Little by little, they formed so pleasant a conception of the surprise she would manifest upon learning who they were and what they had been that one day they could not refrain from telling her.

But their names recalled nothing to the unknowing girl and she fancied that they were only joking.

And that came as a climax to all their designs in this adventure.

Thereafter they became faithful spectators of the *comédie humaine*. They realized how ludicrous their former life had been and how many times they had been literally insignificant while appearing something very imposing.

They were truly sorry now for having so often blocked the streets and embarrassed pedestrians on their reception days at the Palais de l'Élysée.

They poked no end of fun at their successor.

They were wont to dismiss him with the single remark: "Depuis hasn't any prestige."

And now as disinterested onlookers they saw the government as it really was. They became subscribers to *L'Action Française*.

With a clear-eyed ferocity they pointed out all the mistakes of Depuis. And in branding them, they fancied that they were also delivering themselves from the errors of their own administrations, which had been much the same.

One spring day, after a rare dinner in their little café, they hired a coach for a drive around the Bois. But the bridge of the Invalides was blocked. A policeman informed them that Depuis was to cross the bridge with his escort of cuirassiers on his way to visit the king of Abyssinia. For a whole half hour Durand and Dubois waited, chafing with rage. When the carriage of Depuis rolled past, they set up a loud whistle.

For such behavior the police naturally escorted them to the station-house. They hummed the song of *Camelots du Roi* on the way, and at their destination they gave false names.

The superintendent discharged them after a severe reproof. But even *he* never recognized the two ex-Presidents of the Republic!

# Convention and the Movies

By NANCY BARR MAVITY

WE ARE apt to dismiss the moving picture as a cheap amusement for the masses; or, in more lenient mood, as a novel pedagogic device. But its advent marks something more important than ten-cent entertainment or educational method: it is the birth of a new art, an art conceived not in the barbarities of prehistoric religious festival, like music, drama, and the dance, but in an age already self-conscious, and able to profit by the long history of aesthetic development. To be sure its elements are those of sculpture, drama, dancing, and, with the perfecting of color devices, will be those of painting. But all elements are old; in a new combination we have the only originality. Yet we have, for the most part, shirked the responsibility, and given over the opportunities of this youngest of the fine arts to managers who care only to give the most ignorant portion of the public what its untutored taste is supposed to want; unless, with a purpose equally inimical to art, they are spreading information as to the manufacture of, for instance, fountain pens. It is as if all painters were to devote themselves to comic supplements and the illustration of text books.

As a result, we have in the moving picture only an inferior sort of drama. And so long as it follows this direction of imitation, it is doomed to aesthetic failure. For, in limiting itself to the drama, it is of necessity limited to the crudest form of drama: to the melodrama, with its companion, the farce.

High comedy and the modern "drama of ideas" depend largely on character and dialog. But in the photoplay, no nuance of mobile expression is possible. The sole claim of most stars to distinction is their obvious prettiness; our leading movie comedian is Charlie Chaplin. Nothing better is possible; for fine shades of feeling cannot be expressed through a medium which requires the exaggeration of every emotion "registered."

As for dialog, the moving-picture play labors under a combination of the disadvantages of the drama and the novel. In a novel, the author can take a page to describe the motive behind a speech, the precise accent in which it was uttered. In a play, we have, not the description, but the tone itself, from which, as in real life, we must infer the state of mind behind it. But when a sentence is flashed upon the screen, we must make the most of the bare statement. Indeed there is no such thing as dialog, properly considered, in the photoplay; for there is no room for by-play of wit or feeling, still less for intellectual elucidation. Words are used only for the strictly utilitarian purpose of rescuing the plot from complete unintelligibility.

The picture play has had, therefore, to fall back on the "before Ibsen" type of drama. For subtlety and intellectuality are outside its range; and as for realism, its charm depends on a use of detail which would be insufferably tedious if translated into terms of action alone. Moreover, not content with revising the spirit of melodrama, it has restored the same old situations which I remember seeing at Saturday matinees, in my childhood, when a tenth-rate stock company visited our little Iowa town. The superficial novelty of the setting is a transparent disguise. The heroine in the aeroplane soon reveals herself as the identical heroine whom I saw tied to the sawmill in my youth. And the trials ensuing from her accidental presence over night in the hero's room—a situation of whose potential difficulties she seems to have no inkling at the time—do not lay claim to any greater novelty in treatment than the occasional substitution of a garage in the rain for the hero's lodgings.

The movie, then, with unparalleled opportunities for creating its own traditions, has made no effort to improve on those which the genuinely modern drama—infused, that is, with the "after Ibsen" spirit—has left far behind. The recurrent situations are legion—so many, indeed, that I fancy the actors and actresses may one day discover the tiresomeness of the repetition, and rebel into originality.

The most "rubber stamped" type is the hoyden heroine, with hair down her back in preposterously exuberant curls. She is old enough to be married, apparently immediately after "The

End" appears on the screen, but she shows none of the eagerness to "put her hair up," characteristic of the young girls of real life. She manifests a rather surprising lack of imagination—considering her varied experiences—in choosing as her one disguise a boy's costume to which she will by no means sacrifice the curls save by stuffing them into a cap in a fashion which could deceive nobody of sound mind and normal eye-sight; the loss of even this slight concealment is at the mercy of a chance removal of the cap. This heroine does not allow memories of Twelfth Night, As You Like It, Two Gentlemen of Verona, Cymbeline, All's Well, or The Merchant of Venice (to mention examples from only one "before Ibsen" playwright) to mar the sense of the freshness of this device.

But in one respect, at least, the heroine compels our admiration: the steadiness of her nerves surpasses that of a Sargent School graduate. One may note with surprise that Tom Jones's Sophia, though she fainted at the hero's love making (which, we must assure incredulous movie fans, was most respectful) announces to her maid that her legs are quite stout enough to carry her on foot to London. But our modern heroine is so stalwart that we can "register astonishment" at nothing she may do. She flies from one hair-breadth escape to another with a rapidity which would give any ordinary mortal nervous prostration. But, after being shown asleep on an impossible satin pillow (perhaps the censors demure at realistic bed linen) she is quite ready to begin the day with being kidnapped or running over to Mexico in an aeroplane.

Another peculiarity of the heroine is her adaptability. Six months of boarding school transform her so amazingly that, if the name of the school were divulged, its fortune should be made. The habits of a lifetime, not only in dress, but in manners and grammar, are thus rapidly obliterated. However, as merely being taken from India or a South African farm to a house whose fittings resemble the Waldorf has the same immediate effect, the credit must be given to the infant prodigy herself, rather than to her school training.

In other respects, society in a movie play is less enviable. The men are of two kinds: the type who refuses to clear himself

of the charge of murder by revealing his whereabouts (with the heroine, sitting in arm chairs) on the fatal night, and the type who chases her round the room until she is rescued—or escapes, as any muscular young woman would have done long ago—just before the conflict goes too far for our prurient censorship.

In our novels, we are beginning to escape from the domination of “love interest” of a type interesting only in its appeal to a universal sensuality. But in the movies, even Joan of Arc must have her British lover; and Patria invariably climbs into a building which has just been blown up, in order to embrace her Captain Parr. Whether in siege or shipwreck or highway robbery or capture by pirates, there is always time for the inevitable embrace. The movie is still under the dominion of the idea that sex is the only important thing in the world, and that the supreme problem is the hoary dilemma in which the heroine is asked to sacrifice her “honor” for her father or her country or her lover. What the old novels call the “possession of her person” seems to be the only possible object of the lady’s ethical consideration.

The only situation which in frequency can follow as a far second to the above, is the rescue of the hero at the last minute. With a naive oblivion of the number of times the thing has been done before, the executioners place the noose round his neck just before a horseman dashes up with a reprieve, after the fashion satirized by Shaw twenty years ago in *The Devil’s Disciple*.

In comparison with these threadbare conventions of plot, mere stereotyped technic is of lesser importance. To be sure, one does grow weary of seeing no minister who is not of the Episcopalian denomination—lest we fail to recognize him without a distinctive costume—and of having a bosom, by its heave, give notice that the hero and heroine are catching first sight of one another. One finds it a little tiresome, moreover, to have the past appear to a character with an hallucinatory distinctness which should send him to a neurologist. And when masculine emotion is invariably accompanied by clenched hands, and feminine sorrow is always expressed by bringing the arm for-

ward and reaching for the back hair from in front, we approach an emotional symbolism little more realistic than hieroglyphics.

But all of these crudities and inanities are subsidiary to the conventionality of morals from which the conventionality of plot springs. There are as many ways of viewing life and the world as there are people to view them; and in the concussion of any two of these ways lies material for drama. But the melodrama and the photoplay know only one view; and the permutations of its expression are few in number. Socrates challenged us to lead the examined life; but to examine one's own presuppositions is a troublesome task, and one which melodrama shirks. In this sense we have in the present photoplay the most harmful of moral influences; an influence which seeks to perpetuate the antiquated codes of barbarism from which, by the grace of Shaw and Wells and their brothers in art, we are beginning to escape.

Here flourish in full enormity the ethics of jealousy and revenge, and a total blindness to the possible value of truth and sincerity. A man refuses to let a doctor cure his child of infantile paralysis because he thinks this former friend has attempted an intrigue with his wife; the physician, in reality, has taken upon himself the blame which belongs to the wife for unrequited advances. It does not occur to the friend that the husband has a right to know the true character of his wife; nor to the husband that his child's life ought not to be at the mercy of his pride in personal possession; nor, in the reconciliation which follows the wife's confession, does it dawn upon him that her real fault lies in having, for the sake of her reputation, lived a lie and permitted a man to take undeserved punishment in the wreck of an old friendship! Here is a falsification of the way in which all high-minded and honest people behave to one an other, a "transvaluation of values" in which the topsy turvy principles of antiquated romance impress themselves on the minds and conduct of ordinary, thoughtless spectators. No wonder that, in a world so governed, the heroine will pile up misunderstandings rather than risk a reputation for virtue which, if it were solidly founded, would surely be able to withstand the innocent explanation of a suspicious circumstance. The one rule of movie

society seems to be, that no one dare to trust to the intelligence, common sense, or sympathy of anyone else. But then, were it not for this rule, there would be no melodrama!

I take the moving picture, you observe, with intense seriousness. For if the incursion of the photoplay into the field of drama is a failure, the art of the moving picture is not therefore to be dismissed as worthless. Certain experiments have already pointed out the way which its progress must follow. Its mission is not to do badly what has long been well done on the stage, but to find in itself a unique medium of aesthetic expression. The question is, What can be done by its means which cannot be otherwise accomplished?

The most obviously novel feature of the movie lies in its setting—the vast reaches of desert and mountain which no painted scenery can do more than suggest. This opportunity for gorgeous background, the movies have already recognized. But it can, at the most, be only an accessory to, not the substance of, the art. “We like scenery, it adds so;” but our main interest lies in human action. Here again the moving picture has an opportunity all its own; the representation of large numbers of men and animals in action belongs to the moving picture alone. Stage battles are notoriously absurd; and it is a commonplace of pictorial art that the subject must be presented in a moment of repose. But the circling of a great flock of sheep on a western plain moves us with a recognition of new beauty; and the irresistible appeal of the vast crowds of men and horses in *The Birth of a Nation* almost makes us forgive its hackneyed plot and unrelieved fortissimo of execution.

Herein lies the clue to the way of the future. In the movie we have the means of reproducing, not individual human dramas, which depend on delicate interpretation by gesture and speech for their unfolding, but the march of history, the representation of a great movement or of a *Zeitgeist*. Here is room for the most painstaking scholarship, the most inspired artistry; here we have the combined beauty of motion and of form with an appropriate content, against a spacious background. The unforgettable interpretation of the Punic wars in D’Annunzio’s

*Cabiria* affords a glimpse of the possibilities of the new art. When it learns to abandon inarticulate imitation and to speak with its own proper voice, we shall hear the tongues of men and of angels.

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## Facettes

BY GUSTAV DAVIDSON

### PART OF YOUR PAIN

The whole world labors in consummate pain  
Like a woman in childbirth.  
O world, let me become part of your pain,  
Let me mingle my cry in your multiple utterance,  
Let me know the terrible swift frenzy of your delirium!

### ASSOCIATION

What is there in this blue flame  
Which makes me think of Alexander's hosts  
Traversing the deserts of Mesopotamia,  
Or sitting before the gates of Tyre  
In multitudinous moonlight?

### BACK TO YOU

Back to you,  
As to the fountain-source of life,  
I go,  
Plato, Democritus, and you other illuminated ones,  
And as I dip into your imperishable souls,  
My heart wins you back out of the twilight of the forgotten cen-  
turies.

# Charles Reade

By S. J. ROSENBAUM

IT IS difficult to discuss the work of Charles Reade without a feeling of vexation. There are moments in his work when one would fain place him at the pinnacle of his class—others, in which he suffers a deplorable fall from grace.

We are not much given to burning the midnight oil over fiction writers, but re-reading that prime favorite of an earlier day we find the fascinating thief has lost none of his cunning, but robs us of precious hours of sleep as of yore, for Reade was a great story-teller, a magic weaver of tales, who made romance real and reality romance.

Reade ardently desired to be known to fame as a dramatist. He loved the stage and thirsted for its glamor and applause. To a friend, a player, he said, "This infernal profession of yours has a delightful, a diabolical fascination for me. To be a great actor is to inherit a gift of the gods." It is therefore not surprising that his work in the narrative form has the gleam of the footlights upon it. His books are in reality novelized dramas, most of them having seen the stage in addition to publication.

Much that mars his work as a novelist may be ascribed to this predilection for the boards, a great deal of absurd melodrama for one thing and some humor that comes under the head of the "comic relief" of our forefathers.

But despite these technical drawbacks Reade's novels are works of genuine power and interest. Teeming with incident, character is delineated more by action than by analysis, and his work tingles with the conflict of wills, of minds and of bodies.

Reade wrote, as he phrased it, "with the biceps muscle." By temperament combative and litigious he managed to convey these qualities to the written page and many of his books are records of the reform of certain contemporary abuses against which he waged relentless war. A disciple of Hugo, he

was, like that great Frenchman, an ardent humanitarian and reformer; an aristocrat by birth and breeding, his works are singularly deficient in class feeling, but he had all the instincts of his order, although his life was, from choice, spent amongst the people of the stage. He did not pamper the lower orders and a sort of lurking contempt for domestic servants pervades his books. His "Put Yourself in His Place" was a powerful attack on the tyrannous practices of the labor unions of his time. In fact he was notwithstanding his Bohemian bias a thorough conservative.

Beneath his fiery temperament there was a singular benevolence of spirit. His loathing of cruelty inspired his attacks on the private madhouse and the brutal prison. His splendid energies and brilliant talents were expended in the defense of the victims of social and official indifference, and his books may stand as memorials of his own generous impulses and philanthropic purposes.

Despite his aggressive tendencies his softer moments are not infrequent, in which there are passages of exquisite tenderness of profound enforced pathos. At these moments he rises to very great levels indeed, and such good judges as Swinburne and Besant have placed him on an eminence with the highest of his day. That he merits the encomium no reader who has enjoyed the fascination of his brilliant narrative powers, his strong dramatic sense and vivid style will be inclined to contradict.

# Penelope of the Wood

By LEONORA SPEYER

She stands

Withdrawn from all the other trees,  
And huddled in a reticence of leaves  
Close as a widow's veil.

For what has she in common with them all,  
These trees that stripped their boughs  
Of summer's dead renown,  
Forgot the red and gold of her farewells so soon,  
And now,  
Indifferent to the intimacies of snow,  
Snapping their bare twigs at the cold,  
Stand deep in drifted winter,  
Hoarding their sap for Spring's great thirst?

Whilst she, Penelope,  
Still clings to the grave-clothes of last June,  
To brown and frozen leaf on which was written once  
Summer's exultant message.

Faithful Penelope!  
Each year that agony of her reluctant nakedness,  
The pang of leaf new-born  
Amid the whisperings of breathless green and bird,  
And warm, insistent rain!  
She stands estranged from all the other trees  
But with the listening wood she listens too,  
To the high sound of seasons battling;  
She sees the clouds surrender to the swirling sky,  
Throw down their thunders—  
And through the pomp of rainbow-arch  
Comes Spring,  
Reaching his golden hands.

And she forgets —  
Forgets indeed —  
Of all the forest brides she is the loveliest!

Penelope!  
In love — in love —  
And every star must know of it,  
And every bird must sing of it,  
Noon sound it broadly,  
And night, prayerfully!

The trees were right, Penelope,  
Who shall resist this April kissing  
And June's still closer hold?  
(Yet how she grieved at first,  
How sullenly she gave!)

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And now, all through the days that linger less and less,  
The nights grown cold,  
She grieves again,  
Guarding her listless leaves with all the clenched resolve  
    of her strong boughs  
Against the clutch of rain,  
Meets the gale grandly,  
The prowling frosts that bite and tear at her!  
Behold her red with wounds,  
Still beautiful,  
And soughing her defiance above the consternation  
Of all this autumn passing.

*Nor does she yield one leaf!*  
But one by one they pale upon her,  
And one by one they die.

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Mournful, unconquered tree,  
Bent with your many buddings,  
Your many witherings,  
Penelope of the woods —

I stand beside you in the snow  
And suddenly an anger seizes me,  
Revolt against this pale despoiler,  
This tyrant, Winter!

Its words fall gently,  
Pitiless little flake on flake,  
Blow on blow,  
Elusive, chill,  
Inexorable,  
Its words fall lightly —  
And yet the hills lie crushed and blinded,  
Beaten to their knees,  
And the free speech of brook trickles  
And stops.

The very silence all about is muffled,  
Frightened,  
Lost in this clamor of no sound  
That is the voice of snow!

And on me too is scattered its white scourge,  
On hair and cheek —  
On heart —  
The wood will heal to green again,  
The fields will heal,  
But I —  
I shall not heal.

Tree, I too cling to my dead leaves,  
I too have known a budding and a blossoming —  
A Spring!

But woman's Spring comes only once, Penelope,  
And for so brief a time —  
And woman's Winter lasts so long —  
So long —

## Two Humoresques

BY ISAAC GOLDBERG

### PIPPA ON FIFTH AVENUE

Pippa knows not a word of poetry.  
For twenty years her lips have lisped sweet prose,  
And yet she knows it not.  
Beauty of art! She knows that she is beautiful,  
Because men tell her so, and it is sweet.  
But art is another thing beyond her ken.

And yet tonight she crossed Fifth avenue,  
And three men took her home  
When she had gone.  
The first wove her into a symphony  
Whose tones were colored by her amber hair;  
The second wrought the rhythm of her gait  
Into the velvet metres of a lyric cry;  
The third, remembering her twilight eyes,  
Fixed them on canvas for all men's delight.

She went home to her vulgar magazines,  
Her tinsel pictures and her phonograph,  
And told small secrets to a looking-glass.

### QUERY

You call death beautiful. What do you know,  
Except that living fools have told you so!

You call life sweet. What know you of its spell,  
Save what the wise, dumb dead alone may tell?

Yet living fools, alas, will speak forever,  
And wise dead mouths will part their pale lips never.

## Transmutation

BY GUY BOGART

Nature smiled  
Thru early morning mists.  
Soft moonbeams, palm-reflected,  
Retreated before solic rays —  
The two commingling in rainbow splendor caught  
Of dew-drop crystal.  
And Morn awakening  
Kissed with that thorofied draught  
The rosebud  
Which straightway lifted  
A smiling face.

Salvadore Carone's black Nanny goat,  
Sans aestheticism, ate that rose to  
Satisfy her hunger crave,  
Showing her goat-joy.  
So Nature's smile traveled on.

Black Nanny's milk  
Fed dainty Cossette,  
Dark Italian kiddie;  
Sustained her romping feet  
Thru golden sunshine hours.  
In her crib at evenfall  
Cossette, her bottle empty,  
Smiled.  
A lone star-beam  
Caught that baby-gleam  
And back to Nature it returned.

*The*  
**GAZING GLOBE**  
*By*  
**EUGENE PILLOT**



NOTE—All amateur and professional stage and motion picture rights of this play are strictly reserved by the author, to whom application for its use should be addressed, in care of the Stratford Journal. Persons violating these rights will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

**PAUL**

**GOTTE**

*The scene is laid in Paul's study, in a bachelor's main-floor apartment, Rue Fortuny, Paris. There is a door to the left leading into the bed-room; one at the back of the stage leading to the hallway. When this door is open, the inside of the front door can be seen.*

## The Gimlet

*As the curtain rises, PAUL is reading, seated at a table strewn with books and papers. After a few moments, a bell rings. He rises quickly and goes to open the door. A woman enters: it is GOTTE.*

PAUL: You! At last! (*He kisses her.*)

GOTTE: Were you careful to close the door?

PAUL: Of course.

GOTTE: Did you lock it?

PAUL: Yes—two turns of the key!

GOTTE: Bolted?

PAUL: Yes.

GOTTE: Chained?

PAUL: The chain is likewise in place. (*Gotte sits or rather falls on to the sofa.*)

GOTTE: Heavens, how frightened I am!

PAUL: Tell me, what's the matter? Why did you send that little note this morning?

GOTTE: Oh, my dear, I have a mortal dread of being followed when I come here.

PAUL: How absurd! (*He kisses her again.*)

GOTTE (*disengaging herself from his embrace*): No, no, take care! Behave yourself. I'm so afraid. Where am I?

PAUL: Where are you? Why, this is my apartment—our apartment—here I am, your lover, who adores you. (*He kneels to her.*)

GOTTE: Are you positive?

PAUL (*with a touch of the reproachful in his voice*): Now, now, Gotte, you've been coming here for the past two years, and you ask that!

GOTTE: That's true. I'm so upset! I'm positive I was followed here. I took a cab, and was driven first to the "Printemps;" I went in the gloves' department entrance, and left by the hat entrance. I took another cab, went to the "Louvre;" entered the perfumery department door and left through the handkerchiefs'. From there I took another cab and came here. I don't think there's much danger.

PAUL: It would be very difficult to have followed you. Then, why should anyone?

GOTTE: My dear, I think that Gaston suspects something?

PAUL: Your husband? Nothing of the sort!

GOTTE: He must—or else, he must be—after that blunder of yours—!

PAUL: My blunder?

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GOTTE: Yes, and it may have results.

PAUL: The idea! What?

GOTTE: Why, yesterday, during dinner, when Gaston was telling his story of the runaway, and his narrow escape from death.

PAUL: Well, what about it?

GOTTE: You said: "Yes, yes, I know." Well, I was the one who told you that story?

PAUL: Is it my fault if your husband repeats all the stories you tell me during the day?

GOTTE: He doesn't know anything about that, poor man!

PAUL: He's your husband and you defend him—of course. If he'd been a little artistic about his stories, but he's continually casting about for his words. He's a wordy old—

GOTTE: You mustn't!

PAUL: Yes, he is. I get tired of it. Last night I said, "Yes, yes, I know," because he'd been boring me to death for fifteen minutes with that story of the runaway horse; it had absolutely no interest or importance in my eyes the moment I learned he only *escaped* being crushed to death. But I got out of it nicely: I said Bouchon told me about it.

GOTTE: Do you call that "getting out of it nicely?"

PAUL: That wasn't so stupid.

GOTTE: No, especially as Bouchon had left for Blois two days before.

PAUL: I didn't know that.

GOTTE: You did, because you know that every time he goes to see Germaine he tells everybody he is going to Blois—that's said because of her husband.

PAUL: But Gustave isn't jealous?

GOTTE: Possibly, but he doesn't like Bouchon. Now, you see, Germaine said that she was dining with me at Yvette's that day; Gustave went to see Yvette's husband, who naturally had seen neither Germaine nor me. I told Gaston, too, that I was dining with Germaine at Yvette's, and we got fearfully muddled up in a pack of lies.

PAUL (astonished): But how was I to know all that?

GOTTE: "How were you to know?" How do I know? You must always be careful.

PAUL: It's not my fault. I can't always be thinking of everything. If you imagine it's easy—! I've got to think of any number of possible combinations of stories. Why, you must have an extraordinary amount of presence of mind for that.

GOTTE: You might use a little care about ourselves—that's the least you could do for my sake.

PAUL: If it were only for ourselves, it wouldn't be so bad, but if I've got to think of your friends and your friends' friends, and

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try not to compromise them, *or* their lovers. Whew! I must apparently know everybody. How awful!

GOTTE: We need one another, and we must work together.

PAUL: I understand, but still, if I happen to forget the exact hour when Germaine sees Bouchon—Well, well, is it all smoothed over now?

GOTTE: Oh, yes. I had to find some way out of it, didn't I?

PAUL: I leave that in your hands.

GOTTE: I said that Germaine and I dined together at Colin's, in his studio, but that we didn't want to say anything about it, because we were going to meet an old school friend there, who had gone to the bad, and—

PAUL (*admiring her audacity*): Oh ho!

GOTTE: Colin's mistress.

PAUL: Indeed!

GOTTE: And, naturally, our husbands objecting to our knowing *women of that sort*, they would have made trouble. So, you see: if Gaston asks you about it, you can tell him that Colin's mistress, is a flighty creature called Suzanne de Barancy.

PAUL: But this Suzanne doesn't exist?

GOTTE: How stupid you are! Of course she doesn't, but she's dark, her eyes are dark violet and she has a slight English accent.

PAUL: I understand now how to deal with your husband.

GOTTE: Yes. By the way, don't forget to say that you were invited to Colin's the other day, but you didn't come.

PAUL: I didn't come?

GOTTE: No.

PAUL: Well, I'm glad you warned me.

GOTTE: Now, tonight you simply must have dinner at the house.

PAUL: Don't you think that with all those stories to tell, I had better not come?

GOTTE: What a marvelous idea! And arouse his suspicions! You see, we mustn't do anything out of the ordinary. No, no, you must come. Then I've already told Gaston that I wrote inviting you.

PAUL: Ah? Then I've received a written invitation?

GOTTE: Yes. And, remember, don't put your foot in it again.

PAUL: Don't worry. Oh, what's that woman's name once more?

GOTTE: What woman?

PAUL: Colin's mistress.

GOTTE: Suzanne de Barancy.

PAUL: Oh, yes—Suzanne de Barancy.

GOTTE: Oh, I know you'll go and—

PAUL: No, no; Suzanne de Barancy, school friend, gay, dark, English accent—received a letter from you—Bouchon gone to Blois. Lord in Heaven, what complications! Like what I remember of the Hundred Years' Wars when I was studying in college.

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GOTTE: Now, say good-bye to me quickly; I must call on my old sick aunt. I said I was going to spend the day with her.

PAUL: You're not running away like that, are you? How ridiculous! I know I did blunder, but I got out of it, and if your husband was the least bit suspicious, surely he's reassured by now.

GOTTE: No, no, I must go to my aunt's: Gaston might go there. He looked at me so strangely when I said good-bye to him this morning.

PAUL: And you thought—?

GOTTE: During breakfast he kept harping on that tragedy of the Rue de la Fidélité—

PAUL: What tragedy?

GOTTE: Haven't you seen the papers?

PAUL: Not yet.

GOTTE: A married woman—Madame Dunouveau—had a very jealous lover—

PAUL: That's because he loved her so well.

GOTTE: Well, Madame Dunouveau told her lover that her husband was neglecting her, that she hated him, and that never, never—

PAUL: Yes, just what you say.

GOTTE: What!

PAUL: In parenthesis, you understand!

GOTTE: Let me tell you! The day before yesterday, the lover went away on a trip—

PAUL: The lover or the husband?

GOTTE: No, no, the lover! Wait a moment: the lover goes away, or rather, he pretends to go, and says he'll be gone for about a week. The next day he appears in the Rue de la Fidélité, at nine o'clock at night. The lover is cordially received, as he has become intimate with the husband. The maid tells him that Madame and Monsieur have retired!

PAUL: The devil!

GOTTE: Furious, the lover runs upstairs, breaks down the door and fires two shots into the woman. What do you say to that?

PAUL: What do you say? What did she say?

GOTTE: She didn't have time to say a word: she died at once.

PAUL: Surprised husband and wife! What did the husband do?

GOTTE: Nothing. He was too frightened to do anything. The lover said to him: "My dear fellow, I have killed your wife because she was false to me!"

PAUL: What noble sentiments! And then?

GOTTE: The men shook hands, and the lover gave himself up to the police. Well, Gustave talked about that affair the whole time.

PAUL: What did he have to say about it?

GOTTE: He blamed Madame Dunouveau severely and admired the conduct of the lover, whose honor was at stake. Then he looked into my eyes and said: "If you would only take example from that—"

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PAUL: Example? Example! If he believes for a single instant what happened to Madame Dunouveau will prevent one of the ten thousand married women in Paris doing what they have been doing—receiving their lovers between five and seven—Did you ever notice it's always between five and seven?

GOTTE: Yes, that's what makes dinner so late.

PAUL: Aren't you all worked up?

GOTTE: Yes, my heart's beating so! The very thought of danger makes it all the more exciting. But I'm sure Gaston meant something when he said that.

PAUL: Guilty conscience! I don't think he's dangerous.

GOTTE: You mustn't be too sure.

PAUL: What would he do if he knew?

GOTTE: He would kill me, my dear—but that's nothing.

PAUL: Oh, Gotte, you're sublime! But never fear, there is no danger; if your husband really suspected, he would never have talked the way he did, and put you on your guard.

GOTTE: That's so.

PAUL: Now take off your hat; you look as if you were making a formal call. (*He helps her take off her hat.*)

GOTTE: Did you happen to find a little tortoiseshell comb of mine here the other day?

PAUL: Yes; I'll give it to you after a while.

GOTTE: Where was it?

PAUL: Under the sofa.

GOTTE: Oh, yes, I remember.

PAUL: Now, be nice.

GOTTE: I want to know first whether you love me.

PAUL: You know very well I do.

GOTTE: Very much?

PAUL: I adore you. You didn't even say *How d'ye to me when you came in.*

GOTTE: I was so afraid! (*They embrace.*)

PAUL: And now?

GOTTE: I'm not so afraid! Tell me, dearest, did you remember to buy me what I asked you to?

PAUL: Of course, I did. Here it is—here's your gimlet. It cost me thirteen sous. Funny, isn't it? And very well made!

GOTTE: Now you must bore two little holes in the front door, so that if anyone rings the bell, we can see who it is.

PAUL: Without being observed.

GOTTE: Yes. (*They go into the antichamber and start to bore the holes in the outer door.*)

PAUL: How high?

GOTTE: Even with your eye.

PAUL (*boring*): There. How gay you are! (*She sings.*) I like

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it immensely! And who would believe that your husband was a teacher? No one. There we are—the holes are bored!

GOTTE: Now, you go outside and I'll see whether I can see you. (Paul goes outside.)

PAUL (outside): How many fingers am I holding up?

GOTTE (looking through the holes): Two thousand!

PAUL (coming in): Can you see?

GOTTE: Nothing at all. But I feel so relieved. I tell you, I would have refused to stay another instant if you hadn't done that.

PAUL: I can easily understand.

GOTTE: Why?

PAUL: I don't know.

GOTTE: Do you love me?

PAUL (kneeling to her): My dear little Gotte, you know how I adore you, but how you do complicate my life—it's simply tyrannical and charming! I never know from one day to another whether I'll find you the same the next day. Every time I see you it's as if we met for the first time. I have to begin all over again. Since I've come to know you, I've neglected relatives and friends: our love is despotic and self-centered. Your people have adopted me; I'm really a staid member of your family; I'm a relative of your husband and your children. That's the fate of us lovers: to be continually at the beck and nod of our mistresses' husbands and families: at the theatre, at the table, at bridge, at duels—unless they want to kill us, in which case they fire first.—And you ask me if I love you? My dear Gotte, would I do all this for you if I didn't love you? (The door-bell rings.)

PAUL (rising): Dear me, can't we have a quiet moment to ourselves?

GOTTE: Heavens—I hope it isn't my husband!

PAUL: No, no, no, it can't be. Wait a moment, and don't move. (They stand motionless, pale, frightened, and listen. The bell rings again.)

GOTTE: Do you hear? It's someone who's impatient. I'm simply terrified! Feel how my heart beats! (The bell rings for the third time.)

PAUL: The idiot! He must understand that if no one comes, there is either no one at home or that he isn't wanted!

GOTTE (suddenly apprehensive): Oh, the holes!

PAUL: The holes?

GOTTE: That you bored in the door.

PAUL: What a fool I am—I'd forgotten. Wait—don't move. I'll go.

GOTTE: Take care.

PAUL: Don't be afraid. (He goes out tip-toe and returns in a few moments.)

GOTTE: Well?

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PAUL: Gone. It was a friend of mine, Alfred Sapir. I saw him go.

GOTTE: See how useful the holes are!

PAUL: They're worth their weight in gold!

GOTTE: Too bad you live on the main-floor; it's like living in the middle of the street.

PAUL: Yes, yes. Well, what was I saying.

GOTTE: You were saying that I complicated your life but do you imagine that mine's easy and simple? Not at all—I'm continually tormented. I'm forced to lie, conceal, resort to all sorts of tricks, and then when I'm not with you, I have such fearful doubts. I wonder where you are and what you are doing. But you, you are always sure of me: I am at home with my husband—safe! It would be awful—cowardly—if you were to deceive me!

PAUL: Why should I? You know I love you.

GOTTE: Yes, I know. You have no idea what I risk in coming here to see you. Gaston seems so suspicious always, and I never fail to blush. He does get so jealous sometimes.

PAUL: Because of me?

GOTTE: No, dearest, I must do you justice. He's always jealous of the wrong person, and then I feel so strong, because then I know I'm in the right. For instance, the other day, he refused to believe that I stayed three hours at the hairdresser's, and he asked me to swear by my mother's grave, and then phoned to the hairdresser, and asked him whether he had found a comb I had left there.

PAUL: Rather clever of him.

GOTTE: Very—I was surprised myself. Well, he found out at least that I did go there.

PAUL: If it was true, why didn't you swear?

GOTTE (*with dignity*): On my mother's grave! There are certain oaths one ought never to make apropos of a hairdresser. And then, since it was true there was no need in swearing; all he had to do was to find out the truth. I want to keep my oaths for when we may need them.

PAUL: That's right—save the mother's grave oath! Splendid!

GOTTE: I must defend myself.

PAUL: You are wonderful!

GOTTE: I didn't tell you the story to have you admire me; I wanted you to see that my life was not all roses. The man who best understood us was God, who said: "Let him among you who is without sin cast the first stone." He knew very well that life on earth was not one round of pleasure.

PAUL: Probably that was what He was thinking of when he pronounced those words. You're in a philosophical vein today—

GOTTE: But am I not right? What have you to say to that?

PAUL: I know how it's going to end.

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GOTTE: You have no idea.

PAUL: Come to me.

GOTTE: Yes! (*They embrace tenderly, when the bell rings.*)

PAUL: That damned bell!

GOTTE: See who it is. (*He goes and looks through the holes in the door, and returns, pale as death.*)

PAUL: It's a police officer.

GOTTE: A police officer? How awful!

PAUL: Yes, a police officer.

GOTTE: What shall I do? Are you positive?

PAUL: I saw his uniform. (*The officer pounds on the door.*) Listen to that!—At the servants' entrance!

GOTTE: This is really serious. (*The knocks are repeated.*)

PAUL: I simply must go and see what's the matter!

GOTTE: Paul, you mustn't go. I forbid you to go! What if he should harm you?

PAUL: He isn't a burglar—he's a policeman. I must—you stay here.

GOTTE (*terrified*): Paul, don't go—don't go! He might arrest you! How awful! (*She throws her arms about him.*)

PAUL (*freeing himself*): Let me go, darling. This is ridiculous.

GOTTE: I want to go with you.

PAUL: Are you out of your head?

GOTTE: What shall I do, then?

PAUL (*dramatically*): Pray! (*He disappears. GOTTE falls to her knees. A few seconds pass. PAUL returns.*)

GOTTE: Well? What was it?

PAUL: Nothing at all. He only wanted my soldier's booklet.

GOTTE: But I thought you'd already served?

PAUL: There are always a number of extra formalities.

GOTTE: But who was it at the other door?

PAUL: Madame Ravin, my concierge. When she saw the officer she was afraid, the poor old creature—

GOTTE: What would have happened if you hadn't given him your booklet?

PAUL: I should have been taken to the station.

GOTTE: To the station! You poor dear! I would have died!

PAUL: How sweet you are! You know, officers are not concerned with situations like ours.

GOTTE: That's true—but I forgot.

PAUL: You aren't angry with me, are you?

GOTTE: The idea! I know it wasn't your fault.

PAUL: Then—? (*They embrace again, and rise, when the bell rings once more.*) This is beginning to get on my nerves!

GOTTE: On mine, too. I know I'm going all to pieces—my nerves are on edge!

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PAUL (*going to the antechamber and shouting*): I'm not home, I'm not home, I'm not home for anybody! Understand?

A VOICE (*outside*): You're not home! So it seems!

PAUL: That's what I've been telling you for the last half-hour! Good-bye! (*When he returns, he finds GOTTE putting on her hat.*) What are you doing?

GOTTE: You see.

PAUL: Why—why are you putting on your hat?

GOTTE: Because I don't want to carry it in the street.

PAUL: Are you going?

GOTTE: Yes.

PAUL: You're angry.

GOTTE: Not in the least—only, I've had enough of this.

PAUL: Of what?

GOTTE: This first-floor business. I can't stand it. Like being in the street. If you want to see me in the future it must not be here.

PAUL: But you were the one who insisted on my having a ground-floor apartment—in front so as to avoid meeting the concierge. I moved for your sake and now you're blaming me for that! That's most unkind of you.

GOTTE: But think: I come here, I compromise myself, risk life and happiness and reputation in order to spend an hour with you; and you take it into your head to meet your tradespeople at that very hour!

PAUL: My tradespeople? You know that it was an officer. You're not at all fair.

GOTTE: What's the difference? When a man really respects the woman he loves, he tries to spare her such humiliation. You might have warned the concierge.

PAUL: I had no idea the officer was coming; and then I had to give him the booklet. Otherwise I should have gone to the station.

GOTTE: What can I answer? When a man really loves, he is willing to go to prison.

PAUL: I can't answer that. I only hope that you'll be in a pleasanter mood when I see you again.

GOTTE: Which will not be tomorrow or the day after, I can promise you that!

PAUL: Gotte, you're hurting me. You're not a nice little fairy now!

GOTTE: No, I suppose I'm an old and wrinkled sorceress!

PAUL: I didn't call you that. I said you weren't a nice little fairy. That is quite different.

GOTTE: Old sorceress! It's a perfect shame! Good-bye! (*She sweeps out of the room, slamming the door behind her.*)

PAUL: Charming! I'll receive a nice little note of reconciliation in an hour's time. It always ends that way; and then it all begins over

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again: "Dearest love, I was unjust and unkind," and so forth. Meantime, here's a whole afternoon wasted. To work again! (*He opens a work and reads*): "André had finally found that restful calm so necessary to an artist; he had been able to work ever since the beginning of his liaison with a woman of the world."—Oh, these psychologists!

CURTAIN

# Mail Boxes for Prophets

BY ALLEN CROSS

DEAN OF COLORADO STATE TEACHERS' COLLEGE

WHEN I was a diligent reading youth, I had the greatest difficulty in trying to visualize a king in any other habit and attitude than those that one associates with the King who accompanies the Queen and Jack in certain very familiar works of the printer's art. To me a king was a stately being, with long, curly yellow hair, clad in a bright hued doublet with a velvet cloak over his shoulder, crowned and with a golden scepter in his hand. I could picture him drinking wine, but somehow I could never imagine a king in the act of eating. What viands were meat fit for a king? Surely none that would delight my humble, farm-nurtured palate! Perhaps the breasts of quails, the choice portions of a roasted goose, or a boar's head in the company of a plum pudding, although I must confess that I took no fancy to a diet of boar's head myself.

For many years I assumed that this feeling of mine about kings was an individual experience—something that would mark me as a trifle odd if it were known of other men. But a while ago my own sons taught me that they too had a romantic notion about kings. They could not believe that the modest bearded gentleman in a certain group photograph was really King and Emperor. Where was his crown? Do kings really look like other men? Doubtless these boys accept literally the aphorism, "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown."

Those of us who have grown so tall that our heads have pushed up through the lavender mist of imagination realize that a king, if he ever wears a crown at all, removes it and hangs it on the corner post before he goes to bed. We know that his soul delights in other meats than "rosted flesh, or milk and wastel breed." Perhaps as a mid-day lunch a king with his troops in these turbulent times might not scorn a tin

cup of milk accompanied by a wedge of mince pie held in the hand upside down with the point toward the regal moustachios. More than one prince of the blood recently at the front delighted himself with a meal of American sausages eaten from the tin. And these princes look just like other men in their khaki. Kings and princes are pretty much like human beings in these days. There is literally nothing "past speaking of in a king."

Well, there is one image down and none so poor to do it reverence. But still there is the prophet. My figure of a prophet was modeled after Amos of Tekoa. Not long since when I saw Tagore, I said that I knew what a prophet looked like. But did I? In Tagore I saw the cultured aristocrat of the orient. He is Jeremiah or Issiah, but not Amos. The man of Tekoa was a herdsman who broke bounds only once, so far as we know. Then he came up to Bethel on a feast day and spoke his mind in the King's highway over against the defiled altar of Jehovah. If Wild Horse Jerry should plod into Salt Lake to-day from his lonesome steading beside the Buffalo Buttes and in a single outburst of indignation speak his mind to the great ones of the Church and State, we should have a phenomenon parallel to the case of Amos at Bethel. And the amusement of the Salt Lakers would be as great as that of the Bethelites probably was. If Amos wished to be heard with reverence by men whose minds would be open and tolerant to his message, he should have gone farther from home. Then only would the thought that he had distilled and distilled to the fifth essence as he watched his sheep under the stars have had power upon his hearers. As it was, they remembered the flock of sheep and a queer old fellow about the daily routine of a shepherd, and laughed at the poetic message that has become a significant part of the literary exposition of righteousness and the ways of God with the transgressor for all time and for all the world—Bethel, and Salt Lake, and the ends of the Earth.

The kings and prophets of the world, the ones worth knowing, are the men who do the world's thinking for it. They may dwell in out-of-the-way places and fellow obscure callings.

Their neighbors may not—probably do not—recognize their greatness. They do not parade the public ways in regal crowns or prophetic robes. We must have them pointed out for us by the discerning.

For the convenience of the traveling public as well as for the dwellers in the neighborhood there should be some means of advertising the presence of a king, or a prophet of the mind or spirit. Otherwise, since they look and act very much like other men, we shall not know them or their dwellings when we see them.

Some years ago my wife and I were in Oakland, and naturally wished to pay our respects to the shade of Joaquin Miller. A friend, resident in the city, was good enough to offer to take us into the hills to the place where the poet had lived and worked both with hand and brain. We started out early in the summer afternoon, drove along the road that led us through the secluded grounds of Mills College, shaded by its great live oaks. Following the winding road up into the hills, we soon became a trifle confused about the directions. Our driver allowed his car to coast down a little incline and across the dry bed of a small stream. There we met a farmer with a pitchfork across his shoulder. We hailed him and asked if he could tell us which of the two roads just ahead would take us to the home of Joaquin Miller. He looked doubtful. "W'y, turn to the left," he said at last. "About a quarter of a mile up the hill there you will see some cabins back from the fence a little. A queer old feller used to live there. I think somebody told me his name was Miller. But I reckon you won't find him there now. Seems to me I heard that he'd moved away, or died,—or something."

We quickly reached the place. There was no doubt of it. Nailed to a wooden fence post there was a cylindrical galvanized iron mail box, bearing the name in ordinary black paint "Joaquin Miller," such a box as you may get with a subscription to your county paper or purchase outright from your favorite mail-order house for sixty-eight cents.

The Sunday following we were to pay a visit to Jack London. In our friend's car again, we crossed the bay from

Richmond to San Quentin by the ferry, drove northward to Petaluma, and then eastward across the Sonoma hills to the village of Glen Ellen. A rancher in a two-wheeled cart told us which road to take out of the village and about how far to go. A little later a local resident whom we met said that the London's had had their house burned about a year or so before and that he had heard that they had moved away. The crowning ignorance, and insolence with it, came a mile further along the road.

We came suddenly upon a young couple, apparently belonging to the village, lying in the shade of a live-oak tree by the roadside. Our approach was so quick and noiseless and our stopping such a surprise that the young man was very much embarrassed by the informal conduct of his right arm. When it had been removed from what in military terms might be called its "encircling position," and the blush had partially faded from the girl's cheeks, although we knew we were within a mile of our destination, he had the effrontery to tell us that we would be obliged to go back to Glen Ellen, cross the creek, and then drive up the other side of the valley for about six miles. Sure of our way, we disregarded his instructions and sped up the road until we met a farmer, who directed us to a "patent gate" a few hundred yards farther on—a gate that pulls this way (he showed us how). This was the entrance to Jack London's ranch overlooking "The Valley of the Moon." If I visualize correctly after these months, there was the conventional mail box of galvanized iron, but this time bearing only a number.

Soon we found our way up the hill, through the vineyard, past the cluster of modest farm houses in the shade of the ever present eucalyptus trees, and on to the swimming pool, beside which the Londons had spread a picnic lunch for their Sunday guests. We enjoyed the lunch, and the afternoon chat on farming and philosophy, and literature and life with "Jack" and "Charmian," and went our way again, making promises of other meetings and other talks—promises never to be fulfilled.

The world has a right to know its great ones—its kings

and prophets. And lest the dull eyes of the masses fail to recognize them in mind and spirit, they should be pointed out in the flesh while they still live. If the king of a political state insists upon appearing at a race meet in a derby and tweeds, he should be labelled on breast or sleeve in gold braid, "Rex" or "Imperator."

Travelers should be fully advised of the presence of a prophet, and the neighbors made to know, if they are too dull or slow to perceive. If you were motoring across the country, how much more edifying it would be to read from an artistic sign:

PORAGE, WISCONSIN, "FRIENDSHIP VILLAGE"

THE HOME OF ZONA GALE, NOVELIST

AND CHEERFUL PHILOSOPHER

FOUR MILES

than to gaze upon a garish board announcing:

ONLY FOUR MILES TO GAS

THOMPSON'S GARAGE

PORAGE.

In the center of Oakland one should be directed to the places of importance, artistic, and literary,—to the places where Edwin Markham and Joaquin Miller had lived. At the edge of the hills one should see a sign, as artistic as an old tavern board, reading something like this:

THIS BEAUTIFUL DRIVE

TWO MILES

TO THE HOME OF

JOAQUIN MILLER, THE POET.

And the city or the state should supply a bronze mail box, if you insist upon a combination of the useful with the artistic, and a tablet, to be placed at the poet's gate, bearing some such inscription as this:

THE HOME OF THE POET OF THE SIERRAS

JOAQUIN MILLER

VISITORS WELCOME FROM 3 TO 4 P. M.

Perhaps the private wishes of the poet's family would dictate the substitution of "Visitors by Appointment Only" for the last line.

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One should be guided into beautiful Sonoma County not alone by sign boards reading:

SONOMA COUNTY—THE HOME OF THE PRUNE,  
THE DRIED PEACH, AND THE  
RAISIN

One should have information of the fact that makes the county more famous than its prunes; namely, that it is also the home of a prophet. How would a roadside board like this do?

HERE YOU ENTER  
THE VALLEY OF THE MOON  
SONOMA COUNTY  
GLEN ELLEN, THREE MILES  
JACK LONDON'S RANCH, FIVE MILES

Of course, I am intentionally forgetting the annoyance such publicity and adulation would be to most intellectual kings and prophets. I am asking them to suffer that for the general good. Even if the local folk or the motoring tourists do not appreciate or understand the prophet's message, it will be good for their souls to be reminded that there are other values in the world than prunes and raisins. I am thinking too of the natural curiosity of the motorist who wants to know where the prophet lives, as he speeds through a section of the country famous as the dwelling place of a poet, a novelist, a philosopher, a great one of the world, and who passes a monotonous succession of galvanized iron mail boxes bearing numbers like 163 or 256, when he might just as well be informed by mail box or bronze tablet that he is passing the spot where work is being done that is valuable as the products of soil or shop, and which probably extends the fame of the county as far as or farther than these.

# Maxims Torpedoed

A Little Anthology of Antinomies

BY GEORGE WINTER MITCHELL

AUTHOR OF "ANTHROPOLOGY UP TO DATE"

## PREFACE

"Not clinging to some ancient saw"—Tennyson's *Love thou thy land.*

*A good maxim is never out of season.* How about *Better late than never*, when you arrive just in time to see the tail end of your train?

*A rolling stone gathers no moss.* Who wants to be a moss-back? *An honest man's words is as good as his bond*—except when he is drunk.

*Comparisons are odious.* For instance. She's a peach. A peach has a heart of stone.

*Death defies the doctor.* Not altogether, for he can collect his bill from the heir.

*He doubles his gift who gives in time.* Therefore pay in time and keep back half.

*He plays well that wins.* True, unless he cheats.

*Rum is good in its place, and hell is the place for it.* Is hell not bad enough already?

*Silence is consent.* Then all prayers to the Lord will be granted.

*Soon ripe, soon rotten.* Better that than always green.

*Speak well of the dead.* Hurry up with your opinion of the Kaiser.

*Many's the day we'll rest in the grave.* Yes, and many's the day we'll turn in it.

*Seeing is believing.* For instance, the man in the moon.

*Knowledge is power.* So is ignorance.

*Law makers should not be law breakers.* Nor should law breakers be law makers.

*Let sleeping dogs lie,* unless it is feeding time.

*Love is blind* and yet *Love will find a way.*

*Many kiss the child for the nurse's sake, also for the father's vote.*

*Take care of the pence and the pounds will take care of themselves, but don't forget Penny wise and pound foolish.*

*Take the will for the deed. Better take the deed. The will may be disputed.*

*Take time by the forelock. Better by the fetlock.*

*The blind man's wife needs no painting—when she is at home.*

*The foremost dog catches the hare, except when it doubles.*

*There'll be many a dry eye at his death. Yes, and many a wet mouth, since the proverb is Irish.*

*They love too much that die for love. And they love too much that live for love, also they live too much that live and die for love.*

*Tit for tat's fair play. "I'll give tat," as the calf said to its mother.*

*To laugh in one's sleeve. Where else! That's where you keep your funny-bone.*

*Truth is stranger than fiction—to a liar.*

*Two heads are better than one, if you admire Siamese twins.*

*Write injuries in dust and kindnesses in marble, except those you do yourself.*

*Be what you seem to be, but Assume a virtue if you have it not.*

*Nothing is annihilated. Nothing is always annihilated or it wouldn't be nothing.*

*It's a wise child that knows his own father. How about the boy that was father of the man?*

*The nearer the church the farther from God because The devil stands behind the Cross.*

*A miss is as good as a mile, except when you are shell-shocked.*

*One at a time is good fishing, except when you are fishing for minnows.*

*"After you" is manners. Only sometimes. Not when a lady is about to climb a ladder.*

*A friend in need is a friend indeed is better amended to A friend in deed is a friend indeed.*

*A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, depends on whether you are a good shot.*

*It is an ill wind that blows nobody good, and it is also an ill wind that blows everybody good.*

*A pitcher goes often to the well, but is broken at last. Not always. It sometimes falls in.*

*A short grace is good for hungry folk. None is better still.*

*A tree is known by its fruit, except when it is grafted.*

*A woman can't keep a secret. Some do when they die suddenly.*

*Between the devil and the deep sea is a very safe place to stay.*

*Catch the bear before you sell his skin. Not if you can sell it without.*

*Contentment is better than riches and both are better than either.*

*Count not your chickens before they are hatched. You can't, because they are not chickens.*

*Crows are none the whiter for washing themselves, depends on what they wash in.*

*Deep rivers move with silent majesty, shallow brooks are noisy, except when you come to the falls.*

*It's a long lane that has no turning. It is also a long lane that keeps on turning.*

*It's never too late to learn. How does this go with You can't teach an old dog new tricks?*

## Recompense

By ELSIE SINGMASTER

**A**S the door opened, the December wind carried its burden of sleet far into the little room. Though guests were rare on the mountainside, even in the best of weather, and though Annie Dole knew of no living being who would seek her out on a winter night, she was not at first frightened, but only amazed. She rose slowly from her chair, her sewing still in her hands, as though her body were heavy instead of being very light and slender. Solitude and grief and hate had wrought together against the integrity of her mind; a slight impulse this way or that and reason would flee.

When she saw that her visitor on this night of cruel storm was John Eliot, her mental processes quickened as though powerful stimulus had set rusted wheels to moving. Her cheeks burned, her throat grew hot and dry, the fingers which held the needle snapped in two. She did not speak; it was not incumbent upon her to speak. Should Eliot stand looking at her from hollow eyes forever; should he be dismayed at her silence, return to the icy road and the whirling sleet, yet would she say nothing.

It was not until the wind, increasing suddenly its fury, blew out the light, that Annie began to be afraid. Eliot closed the door with a thrust of his weak shoulder and warned her not to touch the hot lamp chimney, but she heard neither the click of the latch nor the hoarse voice. She had seen beside him, before the red flame had changed to a pillar of black smoke, a little girl of six or seven who held close about her a thin shawl. For an instant Annie had gazed at her with the heart-sickening intensity of one who sees another's child, her own being but a child of dreams. Then the darkness hid a changed expression in which the anguish of betrayal mingled with a sharper, more dangerous rage. In the confusion of her mind, one fact stood out clearly. The child could not stay here.

She had seen in that single glance that here were Agnes's bright eyes, here Agnes's light mind, here Agnes's poor soul. She might be ragged, forlorn, but she could not stay here.

When the lamp was lit, Eliot spoke with the cruel sentimentality of a sick and selfish man.

“This is Agnes's little girl, Annie.”

Suddenly Annie sat down and took up her work, the sewing of an endless number of little crosses in the tiny white checks of a gingham apron. She tried to find something familiar upon which her mind could rest, and as Eliot sank into a chair and the little girl stood motionless, she pulled the broken needle in and out of the cloth and thought confusedly of that past which each evening unrolled itself like a pageant issuing from some dim chaos and vanishing into unfathomable blackness. She had found it hitherto an unwelcome and dreary spectacle. Now, by recalling it, she sought desperately for a refuge from the madness which threatened her.

On this little mountain farm Annie had been born, here her mother had died, and here she and her father and little Agnes had continued to live. The father was a merry soul who thought it wicked to cherish grief. He taught the children to read and took them to church miles away on the high road. Annie taught herself to sew and to keep house. In this isolated section of the mountain, giant rhododendrons, undiscovered by vandal hands, put out pale pink blossoms, and white violets moccasin flowers and fringed gentian bloomed unravished. Annie loved all of them, and the brown streams and the clear fresh air and the deer which showed their shy heads in the thickets.

Little Agnes was not like her sister, staid and quiet and satisfied with the woods and sky and the companionship of trees and flowers. She did not like to help with the house-work, but sat idly on the doorstep or in the corner of the settle, dreaming or watching Annie. She took the best of everything and neither admonition or discipline could make her less selfish. With her selfishness she was so pretty and, when she wished to be, so pleasant, that it was easy to forgive and spoil her.

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Her going away when she was eighteen years old was like a flight.

"I cannot stay here, Annie. I shall die if I do. Alice Miller will find me a place in a store and when I am rich you and father shall come, too."

In spite of the grieved protests Agnes went the same afternoon. Even when the father was paralyzed she did not come home to stay. The sight of his immobile face, his slow-moving eyes, terrified her. She would not be alone with him and she was gone in a day.

"I will send you things, Annie, oranges and such things. But I cannot stay. I can't stand sickness. You know I never could, Annie."

It was winter when the father was smitten. Through spring and summer and another winter and summer he sat silent, motionless, likely, so the doctor thought, to remain thus for years to come. Annie tilled the garden and gathered the small crops and drove to the store and did all that she and her father had done together. Sometimes the nearest neighbor came from her house a mile away to help with the nursing, but Annie preferred to be alone, since every one who came asked wonderingly why Agnes did not come home. Annie grew stooped and she was always tired.

On Christmas Day a stranger came to the little house. Exhausted by a long tramp he asked whether he might spend the night. Annie guessed at once that he came from the great colony of sick folk on a higher pine-clad spur of the mountain. He was well now, he insisted, quite well, thank God! He had bright, dark eyes and pleasant, easy ways. He had been a reporter, he said, until overworked and had to go to the sanitarium. That night Annie lay awake, listening to the throbbing of her heart. His bright eyes kept her from seeing the weakness of his mouth and she did not hear the braggart tone in his smooth voice.

In the morning he brought a supply of water from the spring and when he went away he pressed upon Annie a little book.

"I haven't anything to pay you with. If you won't take it for pay, take it for Merry Christmas."

When he went, Annie watched him down the brown wood road with terror. As hungry as Agnes had ever been for life, she had had a cup held for a moment to her lips. This man was unlike any one she had ever known, he was like a visitor from a strange planet. She held to her cheek the hand which he had touched and then she looked about the quiet kitchen and at the sad, motionless figure in the arm chair. All the morning she sat idly, looking into the woods and meditating upon the strange, new emotions in her heart. She knew that he would never come back, but she watched for him day by day and dreamed of him by night.

But in spring, the stranger appeared once more. His Christmas excursion had so exhausted him that he had had to go to bed and there he had remained for a month. Now he was really going back home. He thought he would like to see Annie again and he had got a man to bring him over dreadful roads to say good-bye.

"Did the doctor say it is safe for you to go?" asked Annie. She wished him nothing but good, but oh! if he might only stay here!

Eliot answered with a shrug.

"I'm going anyhow."

Annie brought a chair for him and he leaned it back against the house wall beside the step on which she sat. The evening was quiet and the sky pure and clear above them. About were the heavy, lovely odors of the forest.

"It is hideous over there," said Eliot at last. "A thousand and more sick people who think about sickness and talk about sickness. I would rather die than stay. The doctor says I may have a few years if I go back home and I would rather have those. Perhaps I shall have more. I mean to be very careful. If I had anything I might buy a little place over here, far away from all that horror, but I have not anything." Suddenly he leaned forward and touched the work-hardened hand. "Don't turn away from me. It is so good to see some

one and touch some one who is well." Self-control fled; his whole body shook.

Annie turned her hand so that her palm lay against his, hot in his close grasp. The months of lonely thought had made him inexpressibly dear.

"You might stay," said she slowly.

"Here?" Eliot looked at her sharply. He saw in her yearning gaze only its passion. "With you?"

"Yes."

At the moment Eliot felt that the greatest of blessings had been bestowed upon him. The stars were, after all, lovelier than the city lights, her quiet face more dear than any he had ever looked on.

"I do love you," said he. "You are so good and strong and still and steadfast." He left his chair to sit on the step beside her. "I don't deserve to have you. You mean—" he approached eagerly the subject which he had all his life deftly avoided—"you really mean that you will marry me and belong to me?"

"Yes, answered Annie.

"When?"

Annie's cheeks turned a deep crimson. She wished that it might be tomorrow.

"Agnes is coming home next month. It might be then."

"Agnes?" repeated Eliot.

"She is my sister who has a place in the city." She owed Agnes no courtesy, but with the new affection the old love for her sister had flowed back.

When Agnes came, she took her sister unawares. Eliot had crossed the mountain and had found her before Annie found her, sitting on his chair beside the door. She was young, slender, soft-handed, aware of all her charms. Eye meeting eye struck fire.

Annie, returning, found them side by side upon the step. At Agnes, Eliot gazed as though he could never look away. She was young and he was tired to death of middle age, she was light as thistledown and he was weary of soberness. Her curled hair, her becoming dress, her dainty shoes reminded

him of other women who had dressed to please him. Upon her, circumstances set a wholly fictitious value.

Agnes stayed at home for two weeks and when she went away the stranger went with her. During the two weeks he came but seldom to the cabin, but walked with Agnes in the woods and heard talk of city amusements, of bright lights at night, of excursions to the beach. When the sanitarium physician, surprised by evidences of improvement, gave him a grudging permission to go, he felt that he was freed entirely of any obligation to stay. Annie would understand, must understand that he was not required to stay if he was well. He tried to speak to her and to explain, but her face was stony. She wished them both out of her sight forever.

From them she heard nothing. When the paralytic died, her letter was returned with a printed "not found" across the face. After five years a neighbor brought a rumor that Agnes had been married, had had a child and had died, but could tell no more. To Annie she had long since been dead. She shut the recollection of her out of her mind by the hard work of the day, making no difference between week day and Sunday, work day or holiday, not knowing, indeed, which was the one and which the other. But in the evening she remembered Agnes and her light smile which seemed always real, while the humorous eyes of their father and the yearning and tender gaze of their mother had so entirely faded.

It might have been that now the cruel procession of past events would have gone on and on before her until Eliot fell into an exhausted sleep, had not Agnes's little girl burst suddenly into loud crying. She stood quivering from head to foot as though she had long endured some agony. The sound was too dreadful to be ignored and Annie laid down her foolish sewing. She did not look at the little girl, but asked roughly what was the matter.

Unable to speak, the little thing held out from under her shawl a pair of numb hands in which returning circulation set the blood to stinging. At once Annie rose and brought a basin of cold water. Thus roused she spread a simple supper and

bade her guests eat. When she looked at Eliot, she spoke to him at last without her own volition.

“You are tired!”

“To death. It is death this time, Annie.”

“I will fix the bed upstairs for you.” Annie ignored the bid for sympathy. To her horror she saw that the little girl had moved across the room and had sat down in Agnes’s place on the old settle. One satisfaction Annie had left to her in life, the consciousness at the end of each day that the day was done and the page turned forever. It seemed to her now that the pages had been turned back almost to the beginning. But the child could not stay to torture her and break her heart! Her steps quickened as she climbed the stairs. She made the bed and then she stood still, fighting off a maddening recollection. In the attic there was a trunk filled with little dresses and shoes and coats which had never been given away. There also upon a shelf were ranged a score of toys, carved by their father, boats to sail on a dam in the brook, a water wheel which fitted between two stones, and a hundred ornaments for a Christmas tree.

“She may have them,” said Annie at last thickly. “She may have them all, but she must take them away.”

When she called Eliot, he dragged himself feebly up the stairs, coughing hoarsely. He did not think of the little girl except as a burden which he meant now to shift to the shoulders of another. It seemed to him that Annie spoke sternly and strangely. It could not be that she would refuse him all but a shelter for the night! She had been kind to him once, had loved him. Fate had given him a bitter cup in poor Agnes, but little brown Annie was different, she was steadfast. His ability to fit a word exactly to his thought pleased him and he dared to hope, with sudden passion for life, that he might get well. But he was too tired to think long.

When Annie went out of Eliot’s room and shut the door, she stood for a while on the landing, then she went slowly down the steps, making, as she went, absurd and cunning plans. She would be alone now with the little girl, would have to speak to her and look at her. The little girl could not

sleep with her and must not come too near her; the touch of a child's soft body wrought sometimes a strange spell on grown persons. She would put her into her own bed and she herself would sleep on the hard settle.

On the lower step she stood still once more and prayed in a final effort at self-control for strength to look at Agnes's little girl in Agnes's old place. She had not prayed for a long time and her thoughts found an upward path with difficulty, especially as they were mixed with plans for avoiding the child's gaze.

When she pushed open the door at last, she bent her head low and looked as she walked at the rag carpet. There were little clinking sounds in the room, but she did not hear them. She made a detour round the end of the settle and stood with her back to it at the table, fumbling with her foolish sewing. She meant to tell the little girl to get ready for bed, but it seemed to her that there was danger even in speech. Her attention fixed itself upon the lamp; from it she seemed to see red flames leaping. They filled the room, burst through the roof and were whirled high by the mad wind. She seemed to feel with hideous pleasure the sharp pain of delicate, suffering flesh. A monstrous purpose took slow shape, she breathed deeply and put out a groping hand.

Slowly she turned and looked furtively toward the settle. When she saw that the little girl was no longer in Agnes's place, she believed in a wild, blessed moment of relief that the evening's strange events had been part of a dream. But there was the ragged shawl! Was the child hiding, planning perhaps some mischief? Agnes had planned mischief. Annie saw again the red flame leap devouringly, she turned and looked about the room, her strong muscles tense. She saw the little girl and moved toward her.

Then poor Annie halted, her mad purpose stayed by an amazing sight. She stood still, her hands clenched. The little girl had found a low stool—a stool which Annie and never Agnes had used—and having gathered cups and plates and having brushed with a tiny hand the red cloth, stood now elevated before the sink, her arms in soap suds to the elbows.

She had not heard Annie come in, and she did not look around, but deep in her task, she washed and rinsed. When she turned to find a cloth for drying, she saw that she was watched.

"I thought you were tired," said Agnes's little girl, gravely. "We came so late. I am very, very careful. I—" She saw Annie coming toward her, her face still contorted and she stepped, terrified, down from the stool. "I was very, very careful," said she again. "I wanted to help you. I wanted—" The child's face grew ashen; she had had many hard experiences of cold and hunger, but none had prepared her for the approach of this ravaged countenance, this burning gaze.

But Annie meant now no harm. Trembling, she seized the child and with her other hand she lifted the little face. The eyes were not brown and cruel, but gray and tender; she saw in them not Agnes's perfidy, but their mother's love, not the past of misery, but a future of content. Then at last, the storm, gathering for years, broke, not in mania, but in weeping. With her arms around the little body, her head against the thin shoulder, Annie thought no more of Agnes, nor even of Eliot who by morning would have slept away his disappointed life. Instead she thanked God who had saved her soul and had given her recompense.

## Views and Reviews

THE HEART OF NAMI-SAN. *By Kenjiro Tokutomi.* English version with introduction by Dr. Isaac Goldberg. Boston: THE STRATFORD COMPANY. \$1.50.

A refreshing breath of Japan, with the odor of plum and cherry blossoms, is "The Heart of Nami-San," by Kenjiro Tokutomi, which has the distinction of being the first Japanese novel translated in this country. Tokutomi has been called the Japanese Tolstoi, but a native delicacy and grace save him from the pessimism of the Russian. There is a delightful and unassuming charm about this writer, who does not lay claim to any pretentious realism or moral purpose, but who, having taken his story from fact, with certain problems inherent in it, calls himself modestly "simply a transmitter"; whose touch is felt everywhere, and yet who does not intrude himself upon the reader, even in those subtle moralizations which distinguish the novel. And yet his style is essentially realistic, and his book has a purpose; but this purpose is implicit, not explicit, in the story. His moralizations, too, so natural and engaging, even when they are not placed directly in the mouths of the characters, seem to come from the characters, and are further sustained by a vivid appeal to the reader's experience. When the author is moved to remark on the comforts of home after a long, perilous voyage, he makes us feel that it is Takeo himself musing upon them, at the same time tactfully putting us in Takeo's place. . . . What comfort to have changed our trav-

eling clothes for a snug kimono and to sit at ease beside the domestic hearth, in the full assurance that we have found mother in good health and are surrounded by love of a young and affectionate wife! And when he exclaims on the lust of revenge, we feel it ourselves, in the person of Chijiwa, who is nursing it in his heart.

Equally impressive is the skill with which the novelist draws upon the physical, and especially the natural, world for comparisons that are at once beautiful and striking, and fanciful without being fantastic. Two clouds at sunset are like butterflies with golden wings; the heart of a child is like a clod in springtime: it begins to grow and flourish as soon as the crushing heel or the chilling snow is removed from it. Nami is a delicate floweret destined always to languish in the shade; Nami, in the presence of Chijiwa is like a young squirrel at bay before the pursuit of a snake. Kiji, the mother-in-law, grown stout after the death of her troublesome husband, is said to swell back into spherical shape like a rubber ball after the pressure is withdrawn. Tokutomi, we see, is especially fond of flowers and sunsets; but his book abounds in artistic nature description of all kinds. He has, moreover, a keen eye for natural setting and atmospheric effects. When Nami and Takeo are rejoicing in the first happiness of their wedded life, it is spring, and they go fern-gathering in the meadows. When, later, Nami is secluded at Zushi, a confirmed victim of disease, and she and Takeo

are trying to comfort each other, we feel a vague presentiment in the raging of the storm outside. And when she is standing despondent on the cliffs, gazing at the tempting sea, all the fury of the elements is roused again, and her thoughts are as sinister as the clouds above her. There is a delicate symbolism running throughout. That of the sunset in the opening scene, pointed out in the introduction, is renewed in Nami's letter at the end of Part I, where she describes a dream in which she is on a ship with Takeo, bound for Ikao to gather ferns, and is suddenly separated from him and feels herself falling into the sea; also, in the indoor scene at Zushi, during the storm, where she addresses some verses to the flowers — they are dreams of light and perfume sent from above and consumed in a moment. Inseparable from this is a strain of fatalism, which appears especially in Nami's lament to the waves (it reminds one of Hardy and the despair of Eustacia Vye on the fatal night on the heath).

The admirable portraiture and exposition of Part I, keeping pace with the preliminary action, and the masterfully conducted intrigue of Part II, show that Tokutomi is not deficient in the other elements of the novel. The affairs of the Yamaki household furnish much of the humor and irony, of which perhaps the most notable example is the elder Yamaki's visit to the general. The story, which opens with all the characteristics of a domestic novel, emerges in Part II into a swift narrative of financial and social intrigue; and in Part III the personal element is for a time obscured by the larger issues of war and patriotism, to appear again,

purged and strengthened, at the end. This threefold interest shows excellently the varied problems with which Tokutomi has to deal: marriage, the place of woman and the family in society, the conflict of the old and the new; and in Yamaki he holds up to ridicule those who apply their country's interests to their own gain. All these elements are dominated and united by "The Heart of Nami-San," which the author reveals to us in all its beauty and sadness. None of the morbidity of most realism here; only the sadness (a spiritualizing sadness) of hopeless love, and the sadness of the cry of the cuckoo, its symbol (the sound of which in Japan, we are told, the original title, "Hototogisu," represents). Tokutomi stands for the breakdown of isolation on the part of his countrymen, and such a book cannot but tend to the same end on our part. It dispels many of the false notions gained from stories of Japan by foreigners; it shows us that, after all, we both have the same interests and passions; and it serves to knit more closely our hearts with those of the Sons of Nippon.

B. A. BOTKIN

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SONNICA. *By Vicente Blasco Ibanez.* Translated by Frances Douglas. New York: DUFFIELD. \$1.35.

Blasco Ibanez wrote this novel in 1901, with the title "Sonnica la Cortesana." It is one of the few archeologizing novels that succeed in transporting you to the times and spirit in which it is supposed to have taken place, and reveals the author in perhaps his best vein, — that of description

that rises to interpretation. The tale of the siege of Saguntum by Hannibal, in which the town refuses to yield to the very last, is told with a wealth of power. To match it you must read the same author's great account of warfare in "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse." Whether the gifted Spaniard is concerned with the orgies that take place under the inspiration of his courtesan heroine, or with the cruel details of the siege, he makes you behold the scene, and thrill with an actual sense of presence at the event. Structurally "Sonnica" is superior to the novelist's latest work. Just what he has in store for us under the enticing titles "Venus Dolorosa" and "Los Enemigos de la Mujer" none can yet tell. For one thing, let us hope that he will return to some of his earlier methods, in which there will be less detail for its own sake and somewhat stronger characterization. There can be little doubt that Blasco Ibanez ranks with the chief novelists of today; he is a man with whom all lovers of the universal in letters should be well acquainted. And by all means, he should not be judged by one book alone. To read "Sonnica" is by no means the worst beginning one can make with Ibanez.

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AFTER THE WAR—WHAT? *By James H. Baker*, President Emeritus of the University of Colorado. Boston: THE STRATFORD COMPANY. \$1.00.

During the war we were deluged with floods of belligerent belles-lettres. After the war, another deluge—of reconstruction works. And although they make less exciting reading than war adven-

tures, they are no less important in the literary scheme of things. Indeed, when a man has Mr. Baker's gift of writing about post-bellum problems in the clear, calm, broad manner of the thinker rather than the scattered, turgid style of the propagandist, one must thank him for the pleasure he imparts to subjects that are inherently difficult of deep understanding. It is by no means necessary for us to accept all that ex-President Baker of Colorado University has to say as regards politics, economics, education and social adjustment after the war; it is enough that he is engagingly stimulating,—that he wins us at once by his earnest sincerity. When he speaks on the subject of education, particularly, he speaks with authority, as he has written several volumes upon education in its relation to civic needs, and upon college reform as affecting school and society. Baker sees a more liberal trend to post-war education; he beholds an increase in the study of the physical sciences; he forecasts a new Renaissance, amounting, indeed, to a revelation. His ideal of Democracy, as a method of selecting a genuine aristocracy of worth rather than of birth is emphasized throughout the book; he is "well balanced" without having sacrificed any essential element in the attainment of his intellectual equilibrium. In short, a stimulating statement of impressions that is sure to provoke fruitful thought and lead to independent thinking. Baker's experience as an educator has taught him the skill of presentation; his ideal of the future,—a Christianized Greek culture—attests at once his own broad culture and his undogmatic outlook upon life.

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## THE STRATFORD JOURNAL

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REMINISCENCES OF L A F C A D I O HEARN. *By Setsuko Koizumi (Mrs. Hearn).* Translated from the Japanese by Paul Kiyoshi Hisada and Frederick Johnson. Boston: HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY. \$1.00.

It is a very quaint and appealing revelation of Hearn's intimate life that his Japanese wife presents to us. This exotic spirit, who went to Japan and became more Japanese than the people among whom he took up his residence, was undoubtedly neurotic in high degree; many of his whims, appearing in a person of less talent, would have been looked upon as signs of at least mild insanity. Yet how touching they become in Mrs. Hearn's soft and even account of the strange man, — the eccentric writer whose chief delight was to be at his high desk (made so because of his weak eyesight) copying down his various impressions with infinite care. Mrs. Hearn has avoided all purely literary chat; she shows us her husband as only she could have known him: a man intensely interested in ghost tales, fond of solitude and given to silent weeping for no apparent cause, unbound by convention and insisting on paying five or ten times the price of admission to a temple that pleased him greatly, at times unable to endure the slightest noise in the household; yet coupled with this nervous weakness was a queer strength that enabled him to withstand the pangs of seasickness when far stronger bodies succumbed. Some Americans will be shocked to learn that the great writer was exceedingly careless with money and even indifferent to it.

Lovers of Hearn the writer will

receive this revelation of the man behind the pen with no little pleasure. It is good to discover how really human our great men are, after all. It brings them nearer to us and we return to their works with a feeling of greater intimacy.

DAME CARE. *By Hermann Sudermann.* New York: BONI AND LIVERIGHT. (The Modern Library), 75 cents.

I must confess that, however much I have tried to like this book, it has left me absolutely cold. I shut the book with the feeling of one who, having met a celebrity whom he knew he ought to admire or at least respect, is nevertheless quite disappointed at the realization that this celebrity is after all a flesh-and-blood individual, possessing all the frailties and many of the disgusting idiosyncrasies of other flesh-and-blood individuals. If this review of "Dame Care" seems flippant, I am ungracious enough to attribute the fault to the flippancy of the impression left upon me by this novel.

You can guess from the title what to expect. From first to last you are wrapped up in a gloom that you find it hard to dispel. The German, Paul, the hero, is the very antithesis to our own Pollyanna, and just as unnatural. He is a wooden theory rather than a living creature. To judge from this book, one must conclude that Sudermann the playwright is far superior to Sudermann the novelist. Dame Care continually pursues Paul, the hard-working son of a highly imaginative German farmer possessing a nimble tongue but idle hands. Paul's sad disposition and humble submissiveness are due to nobody's fault but

the author's. Were I in Paul's place, I should most strenuously object to Sudermann's insistence in creating so many unnecessary burdens for a man of my gloomy outlook on life. Indeed, Paul's happiness begins only when his house and farm and all his other possessions go up in flames; for then, and only then, does he feel free from the burdens laid upon him by Dame Care, finding at last enough time to woo and win a pretty but somewhat anemic bride. Yet this book, despite its general lifelessness, is thought-provoking, some of the passages being attuned to the rhythms of nature in her quieter moods.

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THE CHALLENGE OF THE WAR:  
CAN SCIENCE ANSWER THE  
RIDDLE OF THE GRAVE? *By*  
*Henry Frank.* Introduction by  
Hereward Carrington. THE  
STRATFORD COMPANY. \$2.50.

Henry Frank, the well-known popular liberal lecturer, and for many years head of a large society in New York City, where every Sunday he expounded the progressive ideas which he evolved, recently transplanted himself and his labors to the Pacific Coast, and in San Francisco is repeating the enthusiastically received efforts of previous years.

He is a well-known author, having written many books on rather profound subjects, chiefly philosophical and psychological, and has established a reputation which has now become international. This fact was quite recently emphasized when Mr. Frank was invited by the President of the Société Académique D'Histoire Internationale, of Paris, to accept an honorary Life Membership in the

organization. Mr. Frank's chief fame has come to him because of his extraordinary treatises on the subject of "Immortality." He has opened up new vistas of investigation and pursued the subject from a strictly scientific viewpoint.

Besides his two large works on the subject, his publishers, the Stratford Company of Boston, are now producing from the press the last of the trilogy, and perhaps the most important of all, which is entitled "The Challenge of the War: Can Science Answer the Riddle of the Grave?"

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RUMANIA: YESTERDAY AND TODAY.  
*By Mrs. Will Gordon, F. R.  
G. S.* New York: JOHN LANE  
COMPANY. \$3.00.

The great desire of the public to become easily acquainted with the many nations that figured in the late and unlamented war led to the publication of numerous volumes of varying worth. The present book on Rumania is filled with useful information, to which are added an introduction and two chapters by the Queen of the land herself; the latter are written in a rather poetic style, and are as much concerned with the personal aspect of the ruler's troubles as with the misery of the common folk of the land who rushed to the defence of the kingdom. It is unfortunate, moreover, that in a book which is to be sold for the benefit of the Rumanian Relief Funds, there should have crept in a note of animosity to the Rumanian Jew. It matters not at all that these Jews are for the most part non-Semitic in origin; indeed, it matters not that they are Jews at all; they are as much entitled to mere justice as any other

element in any other country. A war that has been fought and won to make the world safe for democracy includes the Rumanian Jews as well as all other peoples. This section of the book, which speaks of the alien race as "intruders" in Rumania—if that is the case then the United States is simply filled with intruders of all races and colors—is little short of bigoted in its outlook. We hope that it does not represent Queen Marie's view. If it does, so much the worse for Rumania. Otherwise the book is full of colorful accounts of the nation and its inhabitants, well worded descriptions of interesting sights and places, and a deep sympathy for the land itself. It is unpleasant, in these days of thrones that are tottering or have already tottered, to read a queen's account in which the sense of personal ownership of the land and people is still regally strong; this is the impression one receives from Marie's contribution to the book.

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THE RELIGION OF A MAN OF LETTERS. *By Gilbert Murray.* Boston and New York: HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY. \$1.00.

"The study of literature is the true scholar's religion," is the thesis set forth in Gilbert Murray's address delivered before the Classical Association. This admirable professor, unlike most of his tribe whose span of life may be measured by the distance from their bed-room to the class-room, is one of those very rare students of Greek literature who revere the past, live fully in the present, and have an ear attuned to the voices of the future. Because of this perspective Professor Murray has

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succeeded in developing a clear, logical and passionate argument for the *raison d'être* of classical studies. For, according to him, the *grammaticus*, or man of letters, is he who, through labor, is so enabled to interpret the works of art of the ancient world as to re-create for himself and for others these works of art and thus to re-live the great moments of their creators.

The greatest enemy of the man of letters, in the opinion of Professor Murray, is he who makes things only in order to sell them. A fine, though trite sentiment, and one that cannot be too strongly emphasized. Unfortunately, however, the world is so paradoxical that men like Professor Murray are obliged to sell those very works of art in which they decry the selling of one's works of art.

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UNDERSTANDING SOUTH AMERICA.  
*By Clayton Sedgwick Cooper.*  
New York: GEORGE H. DORAN  
COMPANY. \$2.00.

Those who have read Mr. Cooper's "The Brazilians and their Country" will know what to expect in his latest book, nor will they be disappointed. The writer has an easy, colloquial style, and better still, an unbiased outlook that enables him to see much among our southern neighbors that less expert eyes would fail to behold. He writes, moreover, from wide experience in the countries of which he speaks, and does much good with his emphasis upon our failure, thus far, to enter properly into the spirit of the South Americans. They are different from us, but not necessarily inferior; they are not so madly in pursuit of the almighty dollar,

and have time for social intercourse even in the transaction of business; they are at times exasperatingly formal in their manners. This and many other characteristics distinguish them from us, yet, if we are to do business with them — and it is largely for the North American business man that the volume was written — we must learn to adjust ourselves to their outlook. That is the secret of the German success in South America, and how far the Germans had penetrated peacefully into that continent may be gathered from one of Cooper's early chapters.

In all, a book that well repays the reading. Not only is it for the man in quest of business opportunities, but for all who desire to acquire an adequate basis for a better understanding of our long neglected neighbors.

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GERMAN SECRET SERVICE IN AMERICA. *By John Price Jones and Paul Merrick Hollister.* Boston: SMALL MAYNARD AND COMPANY. \$2.00

In its spy system as in everything else, the Prussian autocracy was just a little too thorough, and therefore altogether too inhumane, for the peace of the world and for its own health. This book shows how savagely efficient the German ruling class has been in every crime it has undertaken. It is unfortunate that such books are not read more understandingly by the Junker element of every nation; for, their message once understood, the powers of reaction will for their own safety's sake cease to meddle with the inevitable onward sweep of the tide of democracy.

THE FAITH THAT MAKES FAITHFUL. *By William Channing Gannett and Jenkin Lloyd Jones.* Boston: THE STRATFORD COMPANY. \$1.25.

The recent death of Jenkin Lloyd Jones has removed from the world one of the most eloquent of American thinkers. A new edition of "The Faith That Makes Faithful," his book of sermons on the Religion of Mankind, has just been issued by the Stratford Company, Boston. This book, of which 36,000 copies have been sold, is an almost unparalleled success for a book of sermons. It has been translated into several languages. The explanation of its remarkable appeal to people of all countries is that it contains a little of pure piety unadulterated with theology, and is throughout inspired by the spiritual verities free from dogma or creed. It preaches the religion of internationalism.

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PINOCCHIO. *By C. Collodi.* Translated from the Italian by M. A. Murray. Philadelphia: DAVID MCKAY. \$1.00.

This is a fairy tale for children which — shall I admit it? — I glanced over when nobody was looking to catch me in the act of reading fairy tales, and which transported me back into the land of childhood. Having already made one confession, I will now make another: I had a ripping good time reading this book, and especially looking at the illustrations, colored and otherwise. I envy the children their sincere and unadulterated enjoyment of this beautiful story.

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